Encounter

edited by STEPHEN SPENDER *and* MELVIN J. LASKY

FEBRUARY 1959. VOL. XII. NO. 2

Published monthly at 25 Haymarket London SW1
3s. per number (USA and Canada 75c.) Postage per copy: Inland 6d., Foreign 4½d.
Yearly subscription (including postage) £2: USA and Canada $7.50: India 12 rupees
US and Canadian subscriptions may be entered at British Publications Inc.
30 East 60th Street New York 22. Second class mail privileges
authorised at New York, N.Y.

CROSSROADS BERLIN	3	*Richard Lowenthal*
WHAT DOES THE WORKER WANT?	10	*C. A. R. Crosland*
MY PHILOSOPHICAL DEVELOPMENT	18	*Bertrand Russell*
"LOLITA" IN AMERICA	30	*F. W. Dupee*
THE SLEEPWALKER (III)	36	*Arthur Koestler*
POETRY		
SINCE THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR	44	*J. M. Cohen*
NOTES & TOPICS		
THE ANTISEPTIC CITY	54	*Ian Nairn*
THE HISTORIAN'S RISK	56	*Richard Hofstadter*
"EXPULSADA"	58	*Shirley Deane*
THE BOYS WHO CRIED WOLFENDEN	61	*Peter Wildeblood*
BOOKS AND WRITERS		
MME. DE BEAUVOIR IN CHINA	64	*G. F. Hudson*
MONTGOMERY	67	*Alastair Buchan*
THE FABLE OF 2034 A.D.	68	*Charles Curran*
POETS AND POETRY	72	*John Heath-Stubbs*
THE LIGHT TOUCH	74	*K. W. Gransden*
FIDDLER OF OUR TIME	76	*Paul Ignotus*
FROM A DIARY		
DISMANTLING POLITICS	79	*Stephen Spender*
FROM THE OTHER SHORE	82	
LETTERS	85	
AUTHORS	88	

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Richard Lowenthal

The Crossroads

Letter from Berlin

ONCE again, a diplomatic crisis created by a Soviet threat to the position of the Western powers in Berlin is likely to become a turning-point in the struggle for Europe. The capital without a *Reich*, an island city surrounded by the territory of a hostile power, still remains the cross-roads of the continent in the political and historical sense. For it is here that the absurdities of the present division of Europe, and the inherent contradictions of both Soviet and Western policies, may most easily be driven to the point where one or the other side will be forced to make a clear-cut choice of where it wants to go. This is the natural place for precipitating great decisions that have been shirked too long.

Mr. Khrushchev is clearly conscious of this crucial character of any challenge to the West over Berlin: by referring to his raising of this issue as "a litmus paper for testing Western intentions," he has admitted that he is using a public and official local threat—coupled, as it now appears, with private or semi-official offers of local compromise—as a means for forcing the Western powers to make up their minds on the wider questions of the future of Germany and Europe. Nor should it lightly be assumed that by "testing Western intentions" Mr. Khrushchev merely means the probing of Western determination in the face of crude blackmail, or that the speed with which a second phase of conciliatory hints and backstairs diplomacy has followed the opening phase of propagandist bluster proves that he has been discomfited by the unexpected solidity of Western resistance to his threats and is now merely looking for a face-saving way of withdrawal. It is more likely that the blackmailing tactics of the opening phase—to which he may still return—were from the start merely regarded as one of several means for achieving an essentially diplomatic objective. If the need for firmness in the face of threats continues, the need for discovering this true purpose, and for deciding on our political response to the whole campaign, is therefore no less urgent.

IN TRYING to gain a realistic estimate of what this crisis is all about, we must first of all discard certain propagandist images projected by either side. It is not, for instance, true that the threats against West Berlin have been decided on in response to a desperate crisis of Russia's East German puppet state. Certainly the Ulbricht régime is in a bad way. But it is no worse but slightly better off than it was one or two years ago. The material standards of living of the East German population, though still far below those of their West German brothers, have definitely improved in recent years, thanks largely to the ending of the former policy of primitive exploitation for Soviet needs; while the growth of industrial output, however uneven and ill-adapted to consumer needs, has been substantial enough to raise considerably East Germany's weight within the Soviet bloc.

The real weakness of the Communist régime in East Germany is the continued refusal of the people to accept its ideas and its leaders. The more ardently they try to enforce ideological conformity, as they did during the past year, the more alarmingly increases the rate at which their subjects—and particularly the youngsters and the intellectual élite—flee from their cage, however favourable their material prospects. No doubt this steady drain is upsetting to the régime. No doubt, too, the fact that West Berlin is the principal escape route makes action against it

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

eminently desirable for the East German rulers, and Mr. Khrushchev's threat to it has been effective where all other means had failed in reducing the flow from its peak rate of over 4,000 a week.

The need to close this escape-route altogether —and also to stop the politically demoralising effect which the striking contrast between East Berlin and West Berlin has on large numbers of visitors not only from Eastern Germany, but from all the countries of the Soviet bloc—is, thus, the explanation of Mr. Khrushchev's move that I found most popular in West Berlin and Western Germany. Those who hold this theory can moreover back it up with an impressive amount of published and unpublished facts which tend to show that Herr Ulbricht and his associates have tried for more than a year, and on repeated occasions, to get Soviet support for a "tough" move of some kind against the independence of West Berlin, but until now were always stopped at the last moment by Soviet caution. Finally, this view seems to be confirmed by the manner in which the new campaign was launched—beginning with a speech by Ulbricht at the end of October staking the claims of his régime to sovereignty over Berlin, followed by Khrushchev's speech of November 10th denying the continued validity of Allied rights there, and culminating in the Soviet note of November 27th with its threat to "hand over" Soviet rights concerning Berlin to Ulbricht unless the Western powers abandon their rights and negotiate a new solution within six months.

Yet the "Ulbricht theory" of the crisis provides no convincing answer to the question why, failing an acute and desperate danger to the East German régime, the Soviets should suddenly have accepted an East German proposal which they had repeatedly rejected as likely to produce a dangerous increase in international tension. After all, if a man suddenly threatens to set his dog on you unless you do his bidding, it is no explanation to say that the dog would have liked to bite you all along. What matters is to find out what the dog's master really wants from you. The fact that the note's proposal for a "Free City" of West Berlin differs from the original contention that the whole of Berlin was part of East German territory, and that the note has since been followed by a series of hints of Soviet willingness to discuss further alternative solutions possibly involving the United Nations, strongly suggests that Herr Ulbricht may be barking up the wrong tree.

Once we focus our attention on the change in Soviet tactics rather than on the continuity of East German grievances and claims, and on the world context rather than on the Berlin situation alone, the fact becomes obvious that this is one of a series of diplomatic crises deliberately launched by the Soviet bloc without compelling local reason. This new technique of "crisis creation" was first tried out in the autumn of 1957, shortly after the launching of the first Sputnik, when Turkey was persistently accused of aggressive designs against the new Syrian government and threatened with the full weight of Soviet intervention—not only in diplomatic notes and propaganda broadcasts, but by a considerable show of force in the border region. In the case of last autumn's Chinese bombardment of Quemoy, accompanied by Soviet assurances of full support for Peking against any American attack, there was not even the pretext of any new action on the part of Chiang to justify the flare-up: the mere continued existence of Chiang's American-backed forces in proximity to the mainland was considered justification enough for the resumption of gunfire with all its attendant risks. The sudden and unprovoked threat against the "cancerous growth" of West Berlin clearly fits into the same pattern.

Obviously, then, Soviet diplomacy in general has entered a new phase which differs sharply from the kind of "co-existence diplomacy" practised from 1954 to 1957. One characteristic of this new phase is a general return to the deliberate use of threats and of limited force, applied unexpectedly at changing points of Mr. Khrushchev's choosing. Another feature is a shifting back of a growing part of Soviet energy and initiative from the uncommitted no-man's-land of Afro-Asia to the arms-bristling frontier that divides occupied Europe. This double return to earlier methods and geographical concerns accounts for the strange sense of *déjà vu* which haunts the international scene to-day: the excommunication of Tito, the execution of Imre Nagy, the bullying of Finland, the threat against Berlin—is not this where we came in ten years ago, in Stalin's heyday? Yet a warning against overdoing the parallel is necessary. The crisis of 1948–9 marked the end phase of Stalinist post-war expansion in Europe. The Berlin blockade, to take only the most striking example, was primarily an attempt to prevent the consolidation of a non-Communist Western Europe by torpedoing the creation of the West German

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

state before the Marshall Plan could take effect. The Western stand in Berlin was then a symbol of our determination to call a halt to the Communist offensive, and to persist in rebuilding the remaining part of Europe on a different basis—a determination that succeeded.

Mr. Khrushchev's partial return to Stalinist methods takes place in a very different situation, and is therefore highly unlikely to aim at the same objective. Western Europe has proved socially much more stable and has become economically much stronger than the Communists expected—too strong, indeed, to be seriously shaken by anything short of either full-scale war or the loss of its most vital overseas sources of raw materials. The important areas of instability and potential change to-day are the ex-colonial nations of Afro-Asia on one side and the Soviets' East European empire on the other. Mr. Khrushchev has shown consistently realistic judgment in concentrating on efforts to expand Soviet influence among the former and to stabilise Soviet control in the latter, politically vulnerable area. He has given a high degree of priority both to attempts to reconcile the captive nations by reforms and to measures to hold them down by force. All the time he has become increasingly conscious that the goal of stability remains unattainable so long as the non-Communist powers do not accept the Sovietisation of Eastern Europe as politically irreversible, but continue by their diplomatic pronouncements and propaganda to keep alive the hope of freedom.

To obtain this final Western recognition of the status quo of European partition has been the principal purpose of the diplomacy of co-existence. That is precisely what Mr. Khrushchev has meant all along by his slogan of "ending the Cold War": that the Western powers should cease to exploit his difficulties in Eastern Europe, while leaving him free to exploit their difficulties in Afro-Asia both through "peaceful competition" and through the "independent" actions of the Communist parties and their front organisations. That, in particular, has been the meaning of all his proposals for the agenda of a "summit conference." But despite years of diplomatic effort, including some initial concessions, he has not so far succeeded in getting a summit meeting on his terms, or winning Western political acceptance of the East European status quo in any other form. His world influence and his relative military strength have grown conspicuously. Yet the nightmare of another East German rising, another Hungary remains to haunt him. What could be more natural in the circumstances than that, conscious of his strength, he tries to supplement the diplomacy of co-existence, of Rapacki plans and summit invitations, by a return to Stalin-style threats—not for the purpose of achieving Stalin's former objectives, but his own?

That, I believe, is what has happened in Soviet foreign policy since the first Sputnik. Khrushchev's revival of the Cold War is the continuation of co-existence diplomacy by different means. He uses military threats not because he wishes to resume military expansion in the heart of Europe—a lunatic policy, the risk of which he fully appreciates—but because he wants to lift the double mortgage of Western political non-acceptance and of the ring of Western military bases from the conquests Stalin bequeathed to his heirs. He raises the temperature of international relations and talks of the risk of world war, not because he either intends to launch it or genuinely fears such an intention on the part of the American leaders. On the contrary: his whole new technique of "crisis creation" rests on his well-founded confidence that the American leaders are determined to avoid World War and understand that he is equally determined. What he does want is to create a climate of opinion in which acceptance of *his* terms for co-existence appears to the uninitiated as the only alternative to nuclear world war. If Western statesmen have said that they arm to parley, Mr. Khrushchev's device might be, "We *threaten* to parley."

Seen in that context, the earlier bullying of Turkey and the bombardment of Quemoy were essentially "softening-up" actions to shake the confidence of the Americans, on one side, and of their outlying allies, on the other, in the value of their chain of bases. But the threat against Berlin directly raises the crucial issue of Western policy towards the whole of Eastern Europe. For the Western presence here in Berlin constitutes indeed a permanent threat to the consolidation of Communist rule not only in Eastern Germany, but throughout the bloc. And not because of some ridiculous cloak-and-dagger outfits (who can carry on their dubious underground activities also from other bases), but because of the very existence of a Western-style, democratically-governed city which is accessible to large numbers of Soviet subjects without permission. Berlin, in fact, is the symbol of the

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

peaceful competition between the Communist and Western ways of life which the Soviet régime, for all Mr. Khrushchev's brave talk of it, cannot stand. If the Soviets and their East German puppets decided physically to seal off the sector borders and to isolate West Berlin completely from their zone, which by now would be possible without serious damage to their own transport system, and would by itself be sufficient to stop almost completely the flow of refugees without any direct challenge to Western rights, they would only demonstrate their inability to stand the competition for all the world to see.

Finally and most decisively, the Western presence here in Berlin is also a symbol—indeed the most important symbol—of the Western policy of non-acceptance of the Sovietisation of Eastern Europe which is Mr. Khrushchev's main worry. For the fact must be faced that in a context of political acceptance of the status quo of European partition, the Western presence in Berlin would be a meaningless anomaly. Both militarily and economically, West Berlin is a liability rather than an asset to the West. Our moral obligation to maintain the freedom of its two million inhabitants only makes sense as part of a continuing concern for the freedom of East Germans and Poles, Hungarians and Czechs. The only difference is that in West Berlin, the circumstances of the post-war military arrangements have left us an obvious way to discharge these obligations. To all these peoples our continued presence in West Berlin remains an earnest of our continued intention to help them regain their liberty, if only we can find a peaceful way of doing so. By seeking to remove us from here, be it by threats or negotiation, Mr. Khrushchev is seeking to extinguish the beacon that helps to keep alive the hope of freedom.

YET HE is also shrewdly forcing the West to face one of the principal contradictions inherent in its own policies. For the fact is, of course, that while refusing to recognise the division of Europe and particularly that of Germany as final, the Western powers have made no serious attempts to do anything about it, not even when the crisis of Soviet Europe offered the most promising opportunity for diplomatic action. Having rightly rejected any idea of "liberation by war," they have never worked out any coherent policy of "liberation by negotiation," while the Eisenhower administration's post-electoral indulgence in "liberation by declamation" has been deservedly short-lived.

The reason for this inaction is not difficult to understand. Clearly, the Soviet interest in retaining control of the Eastern European empire won by Stalin is a very serious one, from considerations of military security and economic gain as well as of party prestige and ideology. To try and overcome it without war, both effective pressure and substantial offers of compensation would be needed. The pressure can ultimately only consist in the encouragement of the popular forces of resistance to Soviet Communist rule—in keeping alive the Soviet rulers' fear of new risings and their incalculable consequences. The compensation for Soviet security can only take the form of a withdrawal of Western, particularly American, military bases from a neutralised area corresponding to the glacis to be evacuated by the Soviets. In other words, a policy of "liberation by negotiation" can only consist of offers of disengagement, backed by threats of active political warfare so long as these offers are rejected.

Now such a concept is utterly alien to the imagination of the Western chancelleries. There, thinking is dominated either by the diplomatic image of "stability," envisaged ultimately as a stable division of spheres of interest between the great powers, or by the closely related military image of static lines of defence. The military, obsessed by the memory of Stalinist expansion, regard any disengagement from a neutral belt, however guaranteed, as potentially opening the door to some lunatic all-out offensive. The diplomats, unable to understand that their ideal of "stability" is utterly utopian in an age of revolutionary social change, would much rather extract from Mr. Khrushchev a promise not to support revolutionary movements in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, than see their own governments engage in the ungentlemanly pursuits of political warfare. If only stable political and military lines could be drawn to protect the status quo everywhere—what a paradise of senile stagnation the world would be!

Yet the fact has to be faced that neither Khrushchev nor Mao Tse-tung are ripe to become honorary members of the Holy Alliance, and that the status quo of which the former talks is strictly confined to the region in which the Communist régimes are on the defensive against their unwilling subjects. If the West

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

accepted this offer for the sake of "relaxing tension," it would still be exposed to the steady erosion of its influence in other parts of the world, but would lose all means of exerting counter-pressure. It would, in fact, prove that it is as historically doomed to go down before the advance of Soviet Communism as the Communists say it is; even the present Western governments can see that.

The result of this dilemma has been a negative and inconsistent Western policy. The West rejects Mr. Khrushchev's overtures for stabilising the European status quo but proposes no negotiable alternatives; it seeks to stabilise the military lines across Europe and avoids bold political initiative, but holds on to West Berlin, which is useless in a military context and highly important in the context of such an initiative. In short, the West accepts the status quo in workaday practice but rejects it in its Sunday sermons. By raising the Berlin issue, Mr. Khrushchev has challenged the West either to preach what it practises or to practise what it preaches.

Perhaps the timing of the challenge has been influenced by the signs that informed opinion in both the United States and Britain is becoming increasingly conscious of the dilemma. American public reaction to the Quemoy crisis showed a remarkable degree of impatience with life in a dream-world of diplomatic fictions, and the Congressional elections proved the widespread desire to be rid of negative leadership. Mr. Khrushchev may have foolishly mistaken this mood for one of readiness to yield to his threats, or he may more shrewdly be trying to channel the as yet unformed longing for a more realistic and consistent policy in the direction that suits him best. Clearly a new Western policy that brought practice in line with principle by bold proposals for controlled disengagement would be awkward for him; conversely, an adjustment of principles to practice that resulted in readiness to come to terms with the Ulbricht régime as the price of avoiding trouble would be a major Soviet victory.

Apart from other considerations, such a move towards acceptance of the status quo would also produce a major rift in the Western alliance and tend to isolate the German Federal Republic. For while Dr. Adenauer's government has been as unwilling as any of its allies to take an effective diplomatic initiative for German reunion, it is for obvious reasons of domestic politics quite unable to renounce its Sunday prayers on the subject. The new threat to Berlin has aroused a more genuine revival of the desire for national unity among the West Germans than anything I have observed in years, and any Western policy that amounted to recognition of the partition line as permanent would be felt by most of them as a betrayal of the alliance and proof of the failure of the Chancellor's pro-Western policy. The manner in which a large part of Khrushchev's note was addressed to American opinion, and sought to identify the West Germans as the main cause of the trouble, suggests a conscious calculation of these possibilities.

As USUAL, the Soviet move against the Western position in Berlin has two prongs —the threat and the offer. By "offer" I do not mean the absurd proposal of turning West Berlin into an unprotected "Free City" in the middle of the Soviet zone, but the somewhat more attractive ideas that are being tentatively hawked around by Soviet diplomats in various neutral capitals. But as these ideas have not so far been publicly stated by any Soviet spokesman, public discussion in the West (as distinct from discussion in "informed diplomatic quarters"), has up to the time of writing tended to concentrate on the threat.

It is possible to feel that in some of the contributions to that discussion, the anticipatory concern with the possible details of Herr Ulbricht's future action against Allied communications has been exaggerated. I have been told here that if road and rail should get blocked the Western powers can easily supply their small garrisons by air, with the evident advantage that while on land we might have to shoot our way through, in the air the other side would have to shoot first in order to stop us. Against this, it has been argued that to take to the air would amount to abandoning the firm ground of our legal position, and would be subject to the risk of radar-jamming which, while harmless against a small daylight airlift, might become important in case a renewed blockade of the civilian population required continuous and massive supplies. It is, of course, legitimate and indeed necessary for the Allied staffs to make their calculations and preparations for all these eventualities. But I was glad to find that the competent Allied authorities in Berlin and Western Germany drew a sharp distinction between the logistic

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

detail and the basic political decision—which is simply that communications will be maintained and supplies will get through whatever interference is attempted, and that if risks have to be taken to ensure this, they will be taken.

There are several good and serious reasons for taking this line, apart from the simple and obvious one that it does not pay to yield to blackmail. One is that the whole development of the new Soviet technique of "crisis creation" has shown that the crises are not being provoked in order to force a test of strength, but in order to make political gains from "saving peace"—that the threats are an instrument of Soviet diplomacy, carefully controlled to limit the risk. A second reason is the major Soviet interest in not allowing tension to rise to the point where the vital negotiations about the controlled ending of atomic tests—vital because on them depends the chance of permanently limiting the circle of nuclear powers—would become hopeless or could not be carried on at all. This, of course, is one of the few interests which U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. clearly and consciously share. A third reason is the internal weakness of the East German government and its need to become internationally "respectable," which set definite limits to the kind of provocation it can politically afford.

This last factor is particularly important in estimating the chances of a repetition of the blockade of the civilian population, or even of serious interference with West Berlin's economy short of an official blockade. On the face of it, West Berlin is to-day both less and more vulnerable for this type of attack: less because of the considerable accumulation of stocks of food, fuel, and raw materials—more because of the much higher standard of living and level of economic activity. In 1948, the blockade coincided with the West German currency reform. Up to then nearly everybody had subsisted on a minimum level so that both luxury requirements and social conflicts were of negligible importance for the morale of the beleaguered city. To-day, all West Berliners have something to lose, and some of them much more than others. There might now well be a minority who would prefer a timely withdrawal to the fleshpots and bank-books of the Federal Republic. On the other hand, the minimum (and rather more than the minimum), could be assured much more easily; and to those who remember that the most bulky item that had to be flown in during the 1948 airlift was coal, the timing of Mr. Khrushchev's six-month "ultimatum" for a date in spring is in itself a striking indication that no repetition of the blockade is intended.

This should, in fact, be fairly obvious as in the nature of the situation such a blockade would have to be imposed by a self-styled German government struggling for recognition, and would have no obvious relevance to the proclaimed purpose of "liberating" the West Berliners from the Allied "occupation." The precedent of the Chinese Communists' willingness to allow supplies to reach their compatriots on Quemoy in the intervals of shelling is here more significant than the precedent of 1948. Nor should the equally important difference to the case of China be forgotten—that while the Peking government may strengthen its grip by whipping up war hysteria among its people, the infinitely more shaky Pankow government may easily produce panic and disorder if it embarks on a policy of conflict with the Western Allies.

As for interference with the West Berlin economy short of formal blockade, it would only be important if, by delaying West Berlin deliveries, it could undermine Western and particularly West German confidence in the Berlin economy. Yet in contrast to much that happened in the quiet years, the new threat has produced a remarkable rallying both of West German opinion in general and of the business community in particular. As opposed to the flight of a very limited amount of capital and the cancellation of a few orders, a massive placing of new orders in West Berlin has been organised. Moreover, some of the leading German firms working for the Soviet market have proposed transferring the production of the objects in question to West Berlin, so as to give the Soviet government a stake in the unhampered functioning of the West Berlin economy! Whichever way one looks at it, it seems impossible to believe that the direct threat against West Berlin has more than a secondary importance in the total scheme of the Soviet move.

THE MORE important part of the scheme, then, is likely to be the offer of a "solution" for Berlin. As I write this (in early January), it is not yet certain what the final offer is going to be. But both the feelers of Soviet diplomats and our analysis of the symbolic importance of the Western presence in

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Berlin make it likely that the Soviets would be willing to pay a certain price (or to make the East German government pay that price) to remove that presence by agreement, and to obtain by the same agreement the West's acceptance of the permanence of the East German state. Talk of placing the "Free City" of Berlin—perhaps even including East Berlin—under United Nations control, with the United Nations as guarantors of the city's freedom of communications, may well indicate the direction their final offer could take.

The more tension is first built up by threats, the more such an offer would be calculated to be welcomed with relief as "saving peace." Yet in fact it would give the Soviets what they have really wanted all along. The Western powers would leave Berlin, and would lose interest in this last bit of Western-controlled territory behind the partition line. Berlin would cease to be a democratic city and would come under tutelage, with a United Nations commissioner taking care that nothing was done there that annoyed the East German government. The latter, with whom such a settlement would have to be negotiated, would enter the United Nations along with the Federal Republic, and the partition of Germany and Europe would thus become embodied in an international settlement freely accepted by all parties.

The crucial point to be understood at the outset is that this result is implicit in any (even the apparently fairest) agreement on a separate new solution for the "Berlin question." That is precisely the point of the deliberate creation of a "Berlin crisis." By focusing attention on the status of Berlin, Mr. Khrushchev is seeking to build up the suggestion that the position of this city is the one anomaly that requires a solution in the interest of peace. The moment we accept this suggestion, the moment we agree to negotiate a separate new solution for Berlin, we take the wrong turning at the political cross-roads—the turning that leads to permanent acceptance of the status quo of German and European partition, and hence to a major and possibly decisive defeat for the West.

The alternative is not, of course, that we should refuse to negotiate, but that we should insist on negotiating on the broader questions of Germany and Europe. The anomaly that has to be removed is not the position of Berlin, but the partition of Germany and the occupation of the continent by two hostile armies. But we cannot advance that argument convincingly unless we are really willing to end that anomaly—to take the other turning that leads to the restoration of German unity and of the freedom of the East European nations to decide on their own future régimes by a long and difficult process of military disengagement of the Great Powers. We cannot go on indefinitely maintaining the present military dividing line but refusing to accept the political status quo. For we have, at last, arrived at the cross-roads, and we cannot indefinitely remain seated there.

If we have a bold, forward-looking, and flexible policy, we have nothing to fear from such negotiations. We could well discuss the framework of a German Peace Treaty, for instance, such as the question of the neutral international status, the armaments and the frontiers of a reunited Germany, to see what guarantees each side would require—without making it binding unless there was a German partner who would freely accept that status. We could accept Mr. Rapacki's proposal that pending wider agreement none of the nations of Central Europe should receive atomic arms on a temporary basis. This would only be making sure that nothing irreversible should be undertaken during the negotiations, without binding ourselves to discriminate against our West German Allies if negotiations were to fail. We could (and should) thus give the Soviets every legitimate assurance for their security, provided they will agree to withdraw, parallel with ourselves, from the centre of Europe, and to accept binding obligations not to return to interfere with the internal development of its nations, as any such return would then be a *casus belli*. And we could finally, if that was agreed, advise the West German government to accept any sensible interim arrangement that would smooth the transition to unity in freedom—including the necessary co-operation with some sort of transitional government of Eastern Germany that would take the place of the Ulbricht group if the Soviets agreed to withdraw.

Once again, negotiation along these lines would be long and difficult. But it would not lead to surrender, and it might lead to a genuine solution. It would mean that we had taken the right turning at last, and that Mr. Khrushchev in his turn would stand at the cross-roads and have to make his choice.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

C. A. R. Crosland

What Does the Worker Want?

MANY of us feel a nagging confusion on the subject of industrial democracy or workers' control. We seem to be emotionally in favour of the idea, but remain vague as to what should actually be done, or even precisely why. This is hardly surprising. For there is a confusion of possible motives—some are interested in raising productivity, others in eliminating "alienation," still others in giving the worker his "just" rights. There is also a profound ignorance about the experience of other countries in this field.* Finally, there is the puzzling uncertainty created by the fact that the people most concerned, the workers themselves, seem often the most indifferent to the whole idea.

The traditional Socialist demand for workers' control was expressed in terms of rights, power, and status. Not only, it was argued, had the worker a natural right (by analogy with political democracy) to a *voice* in the determination of his industrial destinies; but *only* through workers' control could he achieve effective industrial power, and raise his status above that of a "commodity, bought and sold like any other article of commerce." It was assumed that the desired control could be achieved only by direct workers' management, or at least participation in management.

The aspiration towards workers' management has a long history in the British Labour Movement, stretching back to Owen's ambitious Operative Builders' Union of 1832. A climax was reached in the stormy decade before World War I when even revolutionary syndicalism briefly caught the imagination of the British Unions, and Guild Socialism (a more pacific version) took a strong hold on the minds of younger socialist writers. But that was the high-water mark; and since then the tide has receded rapidly. To-day one scarcely hears a whisper of these matters at Labour Party or Trade Union conferences.

This decline in interest is not due solely to the failure of most actual experiments in workers' management. The fact of the matter is that the status, power, and control over industry of the working class *have* enormously increased—but without any significant extension of "workers' management." The goal has been partially achieved, but by a different route; hence the disenchantment with the pristine slogans.

Thus the status of the worker, in any sense, has been rather substantially enhanced as a result of full employment, rising real wages, social-security legislation, and a general change in the social climate. It could hardly be described to-day in the words of one Guild

* In an effort to bring some order into the discussion, the Congress for Cultural Freedom organised last September an international seminar in Vienna on "Workers' Participation in Management." This was attended by some thirty representatives from Europe, the U.S.A., the Near East, and the Far East. They included senior management executives, Trade Unionists, and labour economists and sociologists. The Conference did not produce (or purport to produce) agreed or definitive answers to the various questions; but it did at least clarify the questions, and reveal how they were being answered in different countries.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Socialist writer as being "exactly that of manure." At the same time the influence of the working class on national policy has grown with the increased political power of the Labour Party and the Trade Union Movement.

BUT the most significant change has occurred within industry itself. The Trade Unions, skilfully exploiting the existence of a seller's market for labour, have established a remarkable degree of control over those management decisions which directly affect the day-to-day life of the worker. This they have done by extending the field of collective bargaining far beyond the traditional questions of wages and hours; it now covers such questions as the organisation of work, equitable pay differentials, promotion policy, and even (through the threat of a redundancy strike or a stoppage over the dismissal of an individual) the employer's most cherished right of all, namely, that of deciding "who" and "how many" to employ.

This amounts to a considerable invasion of management prerogatives; and we have reached the position in many industries where employers (whether public or private) will rarely take a step likely to affect industrial relations without first sounding out either the Union's national headquarters or the local Branch Secretary or shop-steward. There is, in other words, an important check on management. It is no wonder, then, that the workers are apathetic towards proposals for constitutional changes in industry; for this greater influence is achieved *without* formal participation in management and largely *outside* the machinery of joint consultation. A worker, threatened by an arbitrary decision and with a choice between appealing for help to the joint consultative committee or to his Union, will automatically turn to the latter. He knows where the real power resides.

The Unions themselves often display not merely apathy but a barely-concealed hostility towards schemes for associating labour more closely with management. This is not, however, to be ascribed (as it usually is) to a spiteful and short-sighted jealousy of potentially rival methods of working-class representation. It is due rather to a shrewd and long-sighted recognition of the basic truth that the control which they now exercise depends, in the last analysis, upon their remaining independent of management. They rightly fear that this independence would be jeopardised if they were forced to accept responsibility for management decisions, either through actual participation in management or even through too close an involvement in joint consultation.

On this point we should do well to be influenced by the well-known analysis of Mr. Hugh Clegg (which he expounded again at the Vienna Conference). He stresses always that the power of the Unions, which indeed now constitutes an approach to workers' control and industrial "democracy by consent," rests upon the exercise of what is essentially an *opposition* rôle. This does not, and should not, rule out a high degree of co-operation with management; but it must be from outside the managerial structure. Union strength rests ultimately on the threat of a withdrawal of labour, on the lesser threat of an awkward disturbance to production by (*e.g.*) a ban on piecework or overtime, and on the indirect but still powerful threat of vicarious pressure through the government of the day. None of these sanctions could be easily applied by a body enmeshed in, and committed to, the responsibilities of management. The Unions must therefore remain an external, independent force, freely able to choose their tactics and not bound by prior managerial decisions.

The fact is that there must always be, in any type of economy, potential conflicts between management and labour. There *are* two sides in industry, whatever the pattern of ownership or management; and the workers' side must have an untrammelled Trade Union movement to protect its rights. These are harsh facts which cannot be spirited away by moral-rearmament touring-troupes, or luncheons of progressive businessmen, or syndicalist castles in the air. If the Unions were to abrogate their indepen-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dent rôle and leave the workers without proper representation, it would be to King Street, and not to Caux, that the workers would turn.

IN THE United States, the Unions exercise an even more pervasive control over management decisions. This they have achieved, again, by transforming still more completely the nature of the collective bargain. The classic bargain was a top-level affair, negotiated only at relatively long intervals, and confined to the subject of wages and conditions. Now bargaining is extended both horizontally, to include a much wider range of subjects, and vertically, to embrace continuous day-to-day negotiation at the plant level.

At the industry level, for example, the Unions in the coal, garment, and constructional industries have established price-lines, limited the entry of firms, deliberately forced out marginal firms, acted as labour contractors, and generally rationalised the market structures of these industries. At the plant level, many Unions now exercise a continuous control over promotions, dismissals, job transfers, job evaluation, work rhythm, plant discipline, and so on. As M. Paul Barton put it at Vienna,

> Workers' control, which has so often been rejected in Europe although it is one of the major staples of the ideology of the labour movement, is beginning to be established in a pragmatic fashion in the U.S.A. although the trade unions of that country do not for a moment acknowledge it in theory.

In Britain, it is true, the Unions do not exert much influence on top-management policy in the field of prices, investment, or production, confining themselves rather to defending the workers' immediate interests. I myself think that this partly self-imposed restriction (which is, as a matter of fact, gradually weakening) has been carried too far. But at least it can be defended as realistic, in that the Unions have not at present the technical resources (nor the workers the desire) to interest themselves effectively in such matters, and logical in that decisions in these fields can often best be influenced by political pressure on the national level.

In the sphere where the worker *really* wants workers' control, namely in his *day-to-day life in the factory*, we must conclude that the British (and American and Scandinavian) Unions, greatly aided by propitious changes in the political and economic background, have achieved a *more* effective control through the independent exercise of their collective-bargaining strength than they would ever have achieved by following the path (beset as it is by practical difficulties on which all past experiments have foundered) of direct workers' management. Indeed, we may risk the generalisation that *the greater the power of the Unions, the less the interest in workers' management.*

ON THE Continent, matters have proceeded somewhat differently.

In France and Italy, the situation is bedevilled by the deep split in the Trade Union movements and the obsession of the Communist Unions with political rather than industrial aims. Consequently, the Unions have achieved neither the external control which I have already described, nor any effective participation in management. Matters are hardly likely to improve until the French and Italian working classes can create united, non-Communist Trade Union movements.

In Germany, unlike Britain or the United States, we find a strong Left-wing pressure for direct participation in management; and this has found expression in the *Mitbestimmung* (or "co-determination") experiment.

Under *Mitbestimmung* proper, which operates only in the coal and steel industries, the workers in each enterprise and the Trade Unions nominate between them half the members of the Supervisory Board.* These worker-representatives not only participate fully (in theory) in the work of the Supervisory Board, but have the further right to

* The Supervisory Board is a part-time body which appoints the full-time Board of Management, and scrutinises and approves all major policy decisions.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nominate one member, the "Works Director" (whose functions correspond roughly to those of a Personnel Director in a large British firm), to the full-time Board of Management.

Outside coal and steel, in all firms of over a certain size the German workers nominate one-third of the Supervisory Board. They also elect a Works Council, which has certain co-management rights in personnel matters (wage-payments, hours, conditions of work, dismissals, etc.); and the Works Council and management are equally represented on a joint Economic Committee, which exists mainly for the transmission of information from management to workers.

This amounts to a very elaborate legal framework. But there are of course reasons external to industry for this constitutional approach: the German propensity to define and codify everything in legal terms, a tradition of legally-constituted Works Councils dating from early Weimar days, and above all a powerful political motive. The German Left retains acid memories of Krupp and Thyssen, and of the use of economic power for political ends. It was, at the end of Hitler's war, determined to lever itself into a strategic position inside the actual governing councils of German industry; there it could see to it that industrial profits were never again used to finance a totalitarian political party.

In assessing the results of co-determination, we must notice first an incidental benefit: a marked humanisation of German management attitudes. Before the war, not only were employers in Germany still often feudal in outlook, but "personnel management" in the Anglo-American sense was scarcely known. To-day, the psychological effect of legally-sanctioned co-determination, and the practical effect of having worker-appointed Works Directors in two major industries, has been at once to liberalise employers' attitudes and to direct attention to the importance of enlightened personnel policies.

How much actual power does co-determination give the German worker? The Works Councils have undoubtedly advanced his interests and increased his influence on all matters affecting working conditions in the factory or the plant. But, to be sure, they do nothing which goes *beyond* what shop-stewards or branch secretaries do in Britain in the course of normal day-to-day negotiation with the management; and their actual power to influence management is certainly *less*, even now, than that of the Unions in Britain or America.

At the level of higher management, representation on the Supervisory Boards again confers on the Unions in Germany a greater influence than they previously enjoyed over the personnel policies of the firm; but again this is not as great as that wielded by British or American Unions through collective bargaining from outside the managerial structure.

Moreover, with a few exceptions, the German workers' delegates have confined themselves to representing the workers' interests in the traditional "collective bargaining" field; that is to say, there is little participation in *general* management. This explains why many of the difficulties conventionally associated with workers' management have not arisen in an acute form: the danger of divided loyalties, the difficulty of finding sufficient worker-representatives with experience of large-scale management, and the apathy of the ordinary worker to the wider aspects of management. The worker co-managers have largely restricted themselves in Germany to the personnel field which they thoroughly understand; and within this field they have avoided divided loyalties by accepting a first loyalty to the interests of the employees.

One should therefore see the German experiment less as an approach to "workers' management" in the strict sense (for there is little participation in general decision-making) than as an attempt to gain additional bargaining representation for the workers: that is, to supplement the external bargaining strength of the Unions with a Trojan Horse of legal representation within the managerial structure. Seen in this light,

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

co-determination was unquestionably a sound policy for the post-war years. The bargaining position of the Unions was relatively weak; the mood of the workers was far from militant; and the continuous influx of German refugees from the East meant a permanent buyer's market for labour. Under these circumstances, it was a shrewd move to redress the balance by calling in the law and gaining formal representation inside the firm. This has without doubt increased the power of the Unions at all levels; and it has done so more rapidly, and to a greater extent, than would have been possible under any alternative policy.

Yet this power is still *less* than that exercised by the Trade Unions of other countries without the attendant complications of formal co-determination. The German experience therefore does not invalidate the attitude of the British Unions. Indeed, it may well be that as the autonomous power of the German Unions increases, their interest in *Mitbestimmung* will diminish.

In Yugoslavia, we have an experiment not in "co-determination" or "joint management," but in full-scale workers' management.

All the workers in an enterprise elect a Workers' Council, consisting (according to the size of the enterprise) of from 15 to 120 members and constituting the final sovereign body on all matters of major policy. The Workers' Council elects a Management Board of from 3 to 11 members to be its executive instrument for day-to-day management; and the Director, or senior paid official, also sits on this Board.

Before attempting to judge the experiment, we must dismiss one "inadmissible" (as they might say) claim made on its behalf by Yugoslav propagandists. They assert that the traditional objection to workers' management, the problem of "divided loyalties," cannot arise inasmuch as industry is publicly-owned. Since private profit no longer exists, there can be no possible conflict of interest between the workers on the one hand and either the state or the management on the other. Hence the workers do not need free Trade Unions to protect them; and hence there is no conflict of loyalties within the enterprise.

This, of course, is absurd. On the national plane, there may well be an acute conflict over the division of the product—not, it is true, between wages and private profit, but between wages and (for example) capital investment, or military expenditure, or the salaries of the state bureaucracy. The hard-headed rulers of the Soviet Union have, after all, continuously held down wages in the interests both of an unparalleled rate of capital accumulation and the upkeep of a vast military and bureaucratic machine. Similarly at the local level, there must always be potential disputes between workers and management over redundancy, work-norms, wage-differentials, discipline, and so on. These realities are *not* eliminated by a simple change in property relations.

The results in practice of the Yugoslav experiment cannot be finally assessed, for we still lack sufficient evidence.* On the credit side, the Workers' Councils appear definitely to increase the influence of the rank-and-file workers on day-to-day personnel questions inside the plant. They are, moreover, popular for other reasons. They symbolise the split with Russian Communism. Indeed, this was a main motive behind their inception. They were not spontaneously generated from below, by the mass action of the workers, but deliberately introduced "from above" as an ideological weapon in the struggle against Stalinism. This does not, however, make them any less popular. This is especially so inasmuch as they both reflect and contribute to the general process of political and economic liberalisation of the last few years: the (somewhat) greater freedom of expression, the relaxation of austerity, and the decentralisation of economic life. (The Yugoslav economy would now delight the

* The Yugoslav representatives at Vienna struck a somewhat propagandist note; on the other hand we learnt much from experts such as T. E. Chester and Adolf Sturmthal, who had made intensive tours of personal inspection.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hearts of liberal-socialist economists such as Arthur Lewis or J. E. Meade. Central planning there certainly is. But it is carried out not through detailed physical controls, but largely through the price-mechanism. The individual enterprise buys and sells and maximises profits much as it would in a free-market economy.) Lastly, the Councils play an important social and educational rôle, in what is still a comparatively backward country, by giving large numbers of citizens the opportunity of participating in free debate and at least rubbing shoulders with responsibility.

They are, thus, part-cause and part-effect of a welcome relaxation in the political atmosphere. Nevertheless, one may doubt whether they represent any real measure of workers' control. Communist Party members appear to be heavily over-represented on the Councils; and Council decisions (for example, on the disposal of net profits between investment and wage bonus) seem generally to reflect official Party policy rather than the immediate interests of the workers. This might, of course, be due to a miraculously high standard of enlightenment on the part of the latter; it is more likely to be due to an effective system of Party control.

Indeed, if we assume that there must be some divergence of interest between the workers and the management or the State, it is hard to see how there can be even an approximation to workers' control *in the absence of political democracy*. How can the workers exercise control when they have neither free Trade Unions nor political parties to press their claims, while the other side is backed by the coercive power of the State? How can one reconcile "genuine industrial democracy" with the picture presented in Djilas' *The New Class*? One must surely conclude that although the Yugoslav workers have gained an important measure of greater freedom, the system is basically one of Party, not workers' control.

There is the further question of whether workers' control by the method of mass elections and direct management is *technically* feasible, even in the absence of Communist Party dictatorship. Conceivably, it might be in present-day Yugoslavia, where industry is generally on a small scale. But as industrial development proceeds and large scale becomes the norm, the elected workers' representatives will inevitably lack the necessary experience of the techniques of large-scale management. Nor will they be able to acquire it, for they will not be given the time. The Workers' Councils are elected for two years only; and members of the Management Board cannot stand for election more than twice in succession. This will make things rather difficult.

Moreover, the growth of large scale must eventually compel the creation of a technical, professional managerial class. This will certainly alter the balance of power in industry, especially if this "new class" allies itself to the state bureaucracy. Indeed a stage may come when the question is no longer "can the workers directly manage large-scale industry?" (that will have been answered in the negative)—but "have the workers, in the absence of free Trade Unions, any control at all over, or even protection against, the new managerial bureaucracy?"

Although the Workers' Councils are a healthy manifestation in the present stage of Yugoslav development, the future may prove once again that it is not participation in management, but a free and independent Trade Union movement, which is the essential guarantee of workers' control and industrial democracy. And this requires a free society.

PERHAPS the sad history of workers' control in Poland is apposite. True, the pressure for it did not come principally from the Polish workers. It was not one of the slogans of the Cezielski strikers on June 28th, 1956; they were concerned with more concrete and immediate issues. The initiative for workers' control came rather from the intelligentsia. But the Workers' Councils, once established, did evoke a brief, fierce enthusiasm from the workers, with all the signs of a genuinely popular, democratic movement "from below."

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

They never had a chance. They met practical difficulties enough, which might have destroyed them anyway; they lost the support of the workers when they proved unable to grant immediate wage-increases, and were too hamstrung by the central planners ever to achieve real economic power. Finally there was the decision of the Communist Party to emasculate them because they represented a potential threat to its authority. No totalitarian Party can tolerate a genuinely independent representation of the workers in the factories; hence one's doubts as to whether workers' control, in any form, is possible in an authoritarian society.

THE desire, on grounds of *democracy* or *social justice*, to give the worker increased control over management decisions is not of course the only reason for being interested in workers' participation in management. Another obvious motive is the desire to increase *productivity*. But we may perhaps subsume this motive under a further one, namely, the desire to increase the worker's psychological satisfaction with his work; for it is generally supposed that the two will go together.

The "satisfaction" objective may be defined either in modest or in loftily ambitious terms. In the modest formulation, the hope is simply to create a tolerably contented labour force, free from manifest resentments, having reasonably co-operative relations with management, and not prone to unofficial strikes, bans on overtime, and the rest.

But will the aim be automatically achieved, for example, by a change of ownership? The experience of such diverse countries as Britain and Israel, Sweden and Austria, has been that the mere fact of public ownership has little effect on industrial relations. The reason is obvious. Industrial morale depends primarily on local conditions, frictions, and relationships; and these do not necessarily alter merely because, at the national or industry level, the shareholders are replaced by a Public Board.

Nor does formal joint consultation appear to be the panacea. The British nationalised industries all have elaborate machinery for joint consultation; yet as judged by the number of strikes, the rate of absenteeism, or productivity, this seems to have made little difference to the behaviour or morale of the workers. (Generally, those industries which had good relations before have good relations now; those which had bad relations still have bad relations.) Successful joint consultation requires a high calibre of management (which was certainly lacking in some of these industries) and the eager co-operation of the Trade Unions (which was not forthcoming). But the basic explanation is that the mere creation of "committee machinery" has little effect on the underlying social stresses which ultimately determine industrial morale.

There is no clear evidence as to the results of German *Mitbestimmung*. But one may doubt whether workers' satisfaction is much increased by having representatives on a distant Supervisory Board, or the legal right to hear the balance-sheet explained. All this is too remote from the vicissitudes of life on the factory-floor. Co-determination has, as I have said, increased the bargaining power of the workers; but that is a different matter from psychological satisfaction.

A great deal can be done, on the other hand, by enlightened personnel management. More and more British and American firms are consciously adopting a "human relations" approach to personnel matters. In such firms, not only are wages high, welfare facilities excellent, and a superannuation scheme in operation; not only is meticulous attention paid to methods of wage-payments and promotion policy; but also (and probably more important) the personnel managers and supervisory grades are highly trained, the workers' representatives are given full information about future plans and past performance, and an effective channel exists for raising grievances. In such firms morale is often good even though discipline is strict and formal joint consultation absent. But actual consultation is of course continuous and effective; indeed the whole emphasis is

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on communication, consultation, and consent.

Sometimes, it is true, this approach spills over into paternalism. Or it may be used to undermine the position of the Unions. Or it may be carried so far (notably in collective welfare facilities) that, by binding the worker too tightly to a single firm, it insidiously restricts his mobility and freedom of choice. But these are, for the moment, exceptional cases. Generally, a high standard of personnel management may be more successful in creating a reasonable degree of contentment than either a "change in ownership" or "formal joint machinery."

BUT this represents only the "modest" objective. We may eliminate overt resentments and deep antagonisms between labour and management. Do we, thereby, necessarily create a positive feeling of satisfaction in work? We do not (to use phrases which *do* mean something, although their glib reiteration, in Vienna and elsewhere, often makes one want to scream) eliminate *"alienation,"* give the worker *"a sense of belonging,"* and enable him (in some way) to *"fulfil himself."*

Mr. Daniel Bell stated the matter admirably at Vienna.

> The most characteristic fact about the factory worker to-day is his loss of interest in work. Few individuals think of "the job" as a place to seek any fulfilment. There is quite often the camaraderie of the shop, the joking, gossip, and politicking of group life. But work itself, the daily tasks which the individual is called upon *to perform*, lacks any real challenge, and is seen only as an irksome chore to be shirked, or to be finished as best as possible.... The worker's behaviour itself becomes a judgment. First and foremost, it appears in the constant evasion of thought about work, the obsessive reveries (often sexual) while on the job, the substitution of the glamour of leisure for the drudgeries of work. Yet the harsher aspects are present as well....

This "alienation" cannot be ascribed, as it was by Marx, to the system of property relations, nor yet to the absence of workers' management. It is, I think, rooted in the technological processes of large-scale industry, and above all in the atomisation of work—the breakdown of the production process into the maximum number of repetitive, low-skilled tasks.

No doubt one can avoid this de-humanisation in, for example, small producer co-operatives, or in village development schemes in India, or in co-operative farms in Israel. But such examples are scarcely relevant to the industrial West. Here the issue must be faced within the framework of large-scale industry.

AS TO how it should be faced, there is still disagreement. But the predominant view among social psychologists appears to be that the problem is basically one of "democratic participation"—not, however, the mass participation of *all* workers in the *higher* management of the enterprise, but the participation of the *primary* work-group in deciding how its *own* work should be divided, organised, and remunerated. On this view, we must study the enterprise as a social organism, unravel the natural group relationships, and endeavour to align these with the technological necessities of the work-process. The emphasis is on creating structured work groups, rationally related to the production process, and endowed with increased group responsibility and internal group leadership.

But here we enter a field which requires not an article, but a book, and that by a more expert hand than mine. Much patient social and psychological research is going on in many different countries; much more remains to be done. What is important is that the hard-headed leading men in government, industry, and the Trade Unions should suppress their "practical man's" suspicion of sociology. As Dr. E. L. Trist said at Vienna:

> The full development of the human side of industrial organisation is a long-range undertaking entailing continuous and active collaboration between those engaged in industry, those concerned in government departments, and the Trade Unions, and those engaged in social and psychological research. None alone will fully succeed. Together, we have a good chance.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bertrand Russell

My Philosophical Development

First Efforts, Last Replies

One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, "The Cretians are alway liars, evil beasts, slow bellied." This witness is true.
EPISTLE TO TITUS: I, 12

I BEGAN thinking about philosophical questions at the age of fifteen. From then until I went to Cambridge, three years later, my thinking was solitary and completely amateurish, since I read no philosophical books, until I read Mill's *Logic* in the last months before going to Trinity. Most of my time was taken up by mathematics, and mathematics largely dominated my attempts at philosophical thinking, but the emotional drive which caused my thinking was mainly doubt as to the fundamental dogmas of religion. I minded my theological doubts, not only because I had found comfort in religion, but also because I felt that these doubts, if I revealed them, would cause pain and bring ridicule, and I therefore became very isolated and solitary. Just before and just after my sixteenth birthday, I wrote down my beliefs and unbeliefs, using Greek letters and phonetic spelling for purposes of concealment.

My mind at this time was in a state of confusion derived from an attempt to combine points of view and ways of feeling belonging to three different centuries. My thinking was, in a crude form, along lines very similar to that of Descartes. I was familiar with the *name* of Descartes, but I knew him only as the inventor of Cartesian coordinates, and was not aware that he had written philosophy. My rejection of free-will on the ground that it infringed God's omnipotence might have led me to a philosophy like that of Spinoza. I was led to this 17th-century point of view by the same causes which had originally produced it: namely, familiarity with the laws of dynamics and belief that they accounted for all the movements of matter. After a time, however, I came to disbelieve in God, and advanced to a position much more like that of the 18th-century French *philosophes*. I agreed with them in being a passionate believer in rationalism; I liked Laplace's calculator; I hated what I considered superstition; and I believed profoundly in the perfectibility of man by a combination of reason and machinery. All this was enthusiastic, but not essentially sentimental. I had, however, alongside of this, a very vivid emotional attitude for which I could find no intellectual support. I regretted my loss of religious belief; I loved natural beauty with a wild passion; and I read with sympathetic feeling, though with very definite intellectual rejection, the sentimental apologies for religion of Wordsworth, Carlyle, and Tennyson. I did not come across any books, except Buckle, until I read Mill's *Logic* which seemed to me to possess intellectual integrity. But, nonetheless, I was moved by rhetoric which I could not accept. Carlyle's "Everlasting No" and "Everlasting Yea" seemed to me very splendid, in spite of my thinking that at bottom they were nonsense. Only Shelley, among the writers whom I knew at that time, was wholly congenial to me. He was congenial to me not only in his merits, but also in his faults. His self-pity and his atheism, alike, consoled me. I was quite unable to combine into a harmonious total 17th-century knowledge, 18th-century beliefs and 19th-century enthusiasms.

It was not only as to theology that I had doubts, but also as to mathematics. Some of Euclid's proofs, especially those that used the method of superposition, appeared to me very

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

shaky. One of my tutors spoke to me of non-Euclidean geometry. Although I knew nothing of it, except the bare fact of its existence, until many years later, I found the knowledge that there was such a subject very exciting, intellectually delightful, but a source of disquieting geometrical doubt.

Although filled with adolescent misery, I was kept going in these years by the desire for knowledge and for intellectual achievement. I thought that it should be possible to clear away muddles, and that then everybody would be happy in a world where machines would do the work and justice would regulate distribution. I hoped sooner or later to arrive at a perfected mathematics which should leave no room for doubts, and bit by bit to extend the sphere of certainty from mathematics to other sciences. Gradually during these years my interest in theology grew less, and it was with a genuine sense of relief that I discarded the last vestiges of theological orthodoxy.

From Kant to Hegel

MY FIRST philosophical book, *An Essay on the Foundations of Geometry*, which was an elaboration of my Fellowship dissertation, seems to me now somewhat foolish. I took up Kant's question, "how is geometry possible?" and decided that it was possible if, and only if, space was one of the three recognised varieties, one of them Euclidean, the other two non-Euclidean but having the property of preserving a constant "measure of curvature." Einstein's revolution swept away everything at all resembling this point of view. The geometry in Einstein's General Theory of Relativity is such as I had declared to be impossible. The theory of tensors, upon which Einstein based himself, would have been useful to me, but I never heard of it until he used it. Apart from details, I do not think that there is anything valid in this early book.

However, there was worse to follow. My theory of geometry was mainly Kantian, but after this I plunged into efforts at Hegelian dialectic. I wrote a paper "On the Relations of Number and Quantity" which is unadulterated Hegel. Although Couturat described this article as *"ce petit chef d'œuvre de dialectique subtile,"* it seems to me now nothing but unmitigated rubbish.

I had when I was younger—perhaps I still have—an almost unbelievable optimism as to the finality of my own theories. I finished my book on the foundations of geometry in 1896, and proceeded at once to what I intended as a similar treatment of the foundations of physics, being under the impression that problems concerning geometry had been disposed of. I worked on the foundations of physics for two years, but the only thing that I published expressing my views at that time was the article on number and quantity already mentioned. I was at this time a full-fledged Hegelian, and I aimed at constructing a complete dialectic of the sciences, which should end up with the proof that all reality is mental. I accepted the Hegelian view that none of the sciences is quite true, since all depend upon some abstraction, and every abstraction leads, sooner or later, to contradictions. Wherever Kant and Hegel were in conflict, I sided with Hegel.

On re-reading what I wrote about the philosophy of physics in the years 1896 to 1898, it seems to me complete nonsense, and I find it hard to imagine how I can ever have thought otherwise. Fortunately, before any of this work had reached a stage where I thought it fit for publication, I changed my whole philosophy and proceeded to forget all that I had done during those two years. The notes I made at that time have, however, a possible historical interest, and, although they now seem to me to be misguided, I do not think that they are any more so than the writings of Hegel.

Revolt into Pluralism

IT WAS towards the end of 1898 that Moore and I rebelled against both Kant and Hegel. Moore led the way, but I followed closely in his footsteps. I think that the first published account of the new philosophy was Moore's article in *Mind* on "The Nature of Judgment." Although neither he nor I would now adhere to all the doctrines in this article, I, and I think he, would still agree with its negative part—*i.e.*, with the doctrine that fact is in general independent of experience. Although we were in agreement, I think that we differed as to what most interested us in our new philosophy. I think that Moore was most concerned in the rejection of idealism, while I was most interested in the rejection of monism. The two were, however, closely connected.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But it was not only the rather dry, logical doctrines that made me rejoice in the new philosophy. I felt it, in fact, as a great liberation, as if I had escaped from a hot-house on to a wind-swept headland. I hated the stuffiness involved in supposing that space and time were only in my mind. I liked the starry heavens even better than the moral law, and could not bear Kant's view that the one I liked best was only a subjective figment. In the first exuberance of liberation, I became a naïve realist and rejoiced in the thought that grass is really green, in spite of the adverse opinion of all philosophers from Locke onwards. I have not been able to retain this pleasing faith in its pristine vigour, but I have never again shut myself up in a subjective prison.

Hegelians had all kinds of arguments to prove this or that not "real." Number, space, time, matter, were all professedly convicted of being self-contradictory. Nothing was real, so we were assured, except the Absolute, which could think only of itself since there was nothing else for it to think of and which thought eternally the sort of things that idealist philosophers thought in their books.

All the arguments used by Hegelians to condemn the sort of things dealt with by mathematics and physics depended upon the axiom of internal relations. Consequently, when I rejected this axiom, I began to believe everything the Hegelians disbelieved. This gave me a very full universe. I imagined all the numbers sitting in a row in a Platonic heaven. (Cf. my *Nightmares of Eminent Persons*, "The Mathematician's Nightmare.") I thought that points of space and instants of time were actually existing entities, and that matter might very well be composed of actual elements such as physics found convenient. I believed in a world of universals, consisting mostly of what is meant by verbs and prepositions. Above all, I no longer had to think that mathematics is not quite true. Hegelians always maintained that it is not quite true that two and two are four, but they did not mean by this that two and two are 4·00001 or some such figure. What they did mean, though not what they said, was that the Absolute can find better things to occupy its mind than doing sums, but they did not like to put the matter in such simple language.

As time went on, my universe became less luxuriant. In my first rebellion against Hegel, I believed that a thing must exist if Hegel's proof that it cannot is invalid. Gradually, Occam's razor gave me a more clean-shaven picture of reality. I do not mean that it could prove the non-reality of entities which it showed to be unnecessary; I mean only that it abolished arguments in favour of their reality. I still think it impossible to disprove the existence of integers or points or instants or the Gods of Olympus. For aught I know these may all be real, but there is not the faintest reason to think so.

I was very much occupied, in the early days of developing the new philosophy, by questions which were largely linguistic. I was concerned with what makes the unity of a complex, and, more especially, the unity of a sentence. The difference between a sentence and a word puzzled me. I saw that the unity of a sentence depends upon the fact that it contains a verb, but it seemed to me that the verb means exactly the same thing as the corresponding verbal noun, although the verbal noun no longer possesses the capacity of binding together the parts of the complex. I worried about the difference between *is* and *being*. My mother-in-law, a famous and forceful religious leader, assured me that philosophy is only difficult because of the long words that it uses. I confronted her with the following sentence from notes I had made that day: "What *is* means is and therefore differs from *is*, for '*is* is' would be nonsense." It cannot be said that it is long words that make this sentence difficult. As time went on I ceased to be troubled by such problems. They arose from the belief that, if a word means something, there must be some thing that it means. The theory of descriptions which I arrived at in 1905 showed that this was a mistake and swept away a host of otherwise insoluble problems.

Although I have changed my opinion on various matters since those early days, I have not changed on points which, then as now, seemed of most importance. I still hold to the doctrine of external relations and to pluralism, which is bound up with it. I still hold that an isolated truth may be quite true. I still hold that analysis is not falsification. I still hold that any proposition other than a tautology, if it is true, is true in virtue of a relation to *fact*, and that facts in general are independent of experience. I see nothing impossible in a universe devoid of experience. On the contrary, I think that experience is a very restricted and cosmically trivial aspect of a very tiny portion of the universe. On all these matters my views have not changed

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

since I abandoned the teachings of Kant and Hegel.

Mathematics

THE division of universities into faculties is, I suppose, necessary, but it has had some very unfortunate consequences. Logic, being considered to be a branch of philosophy and having been treated by Aristotle, has been considered to be a subject only to be treated by those who are proficient in Greek. Mathematics, as a consequence, has only been treated by those who knew no logic. From the time of Aristotle and Euclid to the present century, this divorce has been disastrous. It was at the International Congress of Philosophy in Paris in the year 1900 that I became aware of the importance of logical reform for the philosophy of mathematics. It was through hearing discussions between Peano of Turin and the other assembled philosophers that I became aware of this. I had not previously known his work, but I was impressed by the fact that, in every discussion, he showed more precision and more logical rigour than was shown by anybody else. I went to him and said, "I wish to read all your works. Have you got copies with you?" He had, and I immediately read them all. It was they that gave the impetus to my own views on the principles of mathematics.

I finished the first draft of *The Principles of Mathematics* on the last day of the 19th century —*i.e.*, December 31st, 1900. The months since the previous July had been an intellectual honeymoon such as I have never experienced before or since. Every day I found myself understanding something that I had not understood on the previous day. I thought all difficulties were solved and all problems were at an end. But the honeymoon could not last, and early in the following year intellectual sorrow descended upon me in full measure.

Throughout the years from 1900 to 1910 both Whitehead and I gave the bulk of our time to what ultimately became *Principia Mathematica*. Although the third volume of this work was not published until 1913, our part in it (apart from proof-reading) was finished in 1910 when we took the whole manuscript to the Cambridge University Press. *The Principles of Mathematics* turned out to be a crude and rather immature draft of the subsequent work, from which, however, it differed in containing controversy with other philosophies of mathematics.

The problems with which we had to contend were of two sorts: philosophical and mathematical. Broadly speaking, Whitehead left the philosophical problems to me. As for the mathematical problems, Whitehead invented most of the notation, except in so far as it was taken over from Peano; I did most of the work concerned with series and Whitehead did most of the rest. But this only applies to first drafts. Every part was done three times over. When one of us had produced a first draft, he would send it to the other, who would usually modify it considerably. After which, the one who had made the first draft would put it into final form. There is hardly a line in all the three volumes which is not a joint product.

The primary aim of *Principia Mathematica* was to show that all pure mathematics follows from purely logical premisses and uses only concepts definable in logical terms. This was, of course, an antithesis to the doctrines of Kant, and initially I thought of the work as a parenthesis in the refutation of "yonder sophistical Philistine," as Georg Cantor described him, adding for the sake of further definiteness, "who knew so little mathematics." But as time went on, the work developed in two different directions. On the mathematical side, whole new subjects came to light, involving new algorithms making possible the symbolic treatment of matters previously left to the diffuseness and inaccuracy of ordinary language. On the philosophical side, there were two opposite developments, one pleasant and the other unpleasant. The pleasant one was that the logical apparatus required turned out to be smaller than I had supposed. More especially, classes turned out to be unnecessary. In *The Principles of Mathematics* there is a lot of discussion about the distinction between a class as one and a class as many. The whole of this discussion, along with a great many complicated arguments contained in that book, proved unnecessary. The consequence was that the work in its final form appeared to lack that philosophic profundity of which obscurity is the most easily recognisable feature.

The unpleasant aspect was indubitably very unpleasant. It appeared that, from premisses which all logicians of no matter what school had accepted ever since the time of Aristotle, contradictions could be deduced, showing that *something* was amiss but giving no indication as to how matters were to be put right. It was the

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

discovery of one such contradiction, in the spring of 1901, that put an end to the logical honeymoon that I had been enjoying. I communicated the misfortune to Whitehead, who failed to console me by quoting, "never glad confident morning again. . . ."

I was led to this contradiction by considering Cantor's proof that there is no greatest cardinal number. I thought, in my innocence, that the number of all the things there are in the world must be the greatest possible number, and I applied his proof to this number to see what would happen. This process led me to the consideration of a very peculiar class. Thinking along the lines which had hitherto seemed adequate, it seemed to me that a class sometimes is, and sometimes is not, a member of itself. The class of teaspoons, for example, is not another teaspoon, but the class of things that are not teaspoons is one of the things that are not teaspoons. There seemed to be instances which are not negative: for example, the class of all classes is a class. The application of Cantor's argument led me to consider the classes that are not members of themselves; and these, it seemed, must form a class. I asked myself whether this class is a member of itself or not. If it is a member of itself, it must possess the defining property of the class, which is to be not a member of itself. If it is not a member of itself, it must not possess the defining property of the class, and therefore must be a member of itself. Thus each alternative leads to its opposite and there is a contradiction.

At first I thought there must be some trivial error in my reasoning. I inspected each step under a logical microscope, but I could not discover anything wrong. I wrote to Frege about it, who replied that arithmetic was tottering and that he saw that his Law V was false. Frege was so disturbed by this contradiction that he gave up the attempt to deduce arithmetic from logic, to which, until then, his life had been mainly devoted. Like the Pythagoreans when confronted with incommensurables, he took refuge in geometry and apparently considered that his life's work up to that moment had been misguided. For my part, I felt that the trouble lay in logic rather than in mathematics and that it was logic which would have to be reformed. I was confirmed in this view by discovering a recipe by means of which a strictly infinite number of contradictions could be manufactured.

Philosophers and mathematicians reacted in various different ways to this situation. Poincaré, who disliked mathematical logic and had accused it of being sterile, exclaimed with glee, "it is no longer sterile, it begets contradiction." This was all very well, but it did nothing towards the solution of the problem. Some other mathematicians, who disapproved of Georg Cantor, adopted the March Hare's solution: "I'm tired of this. Let's change the subject." This, also, appeared to me inadequate. After a time, however, there came to be serious attempts at solution by men who understood mathematical logic and realised the imperative necessity of a solution in terms of logic. The first of these was F. P. Ramsey, whose early death unfortunately left his work incomplete. But during the years before the publication of *Principia Mathematica*, I did not have the advantage of these later attempts at solution, and was left virtually alone with my bewilderment.

When *The Principles of Mathematics* was finished, I settled down to a resolute attempt to find a solution of the paradoxes. I felt this as almost a personal challenge and I would, if necessary, have spent the whole of the rest of my life in an attempt to meet it. But for two reasons I found this exceedingly disagreeable. In the first place, the whole problem struck me as trivial and I hated having to concentrate attention upon something that did not seem intrinsically interesting. In the second place, try as I would, I could make no progress. Throughout 1903 and 1904, my work was almost wholly devoted to this matter, but without any vestige of success.

BOTH Whitehead and I were disappointed that *Principia Mathematica* was only viewed from a philosophical standpoint. People were interested in what was said about the contradictions and in the question whether ordinary mathematics had been validly deduced from purely logical premisses, but they were not interested in the mathematical techniques developed in the course of the work. I used to know of only six people who had read the later parts of the book. Three of these were Poles, subsequently (I believe) liquidated by Hitler. The other three were Texans, subsequently successfully assimilated. Even those who were working on exactly the same subjects did not think it worth while to find out what *Principia Mathematica* had to say on them. I will give two illustrations: *Mathematische Annalen* published

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

about ten years after the publication of *Principia* a long article giving some of the results which (unknown to the author) we had worked out in Part IV of our book. This article fell into certain inaccuracies which we had avoided, but contained nothing valid which we had not already published. The author was obviously totally unaware that he had been anticipated. The second example occurred when I was a colleague of Reichenbach at the University of California. He told me that he had invented an extension of mathematical induction which he called "transfinite induction." I told him that this subject was fully treated in the third volume of the *Principia*. When I saw him a week later, he told me he had verified this....

We were faced by an unexpected difficulty. It appeared that, when the number of classes is infinite, one cannot be sure that any selections are possible. When the number of classes concerned is finite, we can pick out a representative arbitrarily from each of them, as is done in a General Election; but, when the number of classes concerned is infinite, we cannot make an infinite number of arbitrary acts of choice, and we cannot be sure that a selection is possible unless there is some intension which secures the desired result. I will give an illustration: there was once a millionaire who bought an infinite number of pairs of shoes and, whenever he bought a pair of shoes, he also bought a pair of socks. We can make a selection choosing one out of each pair of shoes, because we can choose always the right shoe or always the left shoe. Thus, so far as the shoes are concerned, selections exist. But, as regards the socks, where there is no distinction of right and left, we cannot use this rule of selection. If we are to be able to make a selection out of the socks, we shall have to adopt some much more elaborate method. We could, for example, find a point such that, in each pair of socks, one of the pair is nearer to this point than to the other. We should then obtain a selection by choosing from each pair the one nearer the point in question.

I once put this puzzle to a German mathematician to whom I happened to sit next at the High Table at Trinity, but his only comment was: "Why a millionaire?"

SHORTLY after the writing of *Principia Mathematica* was finished, and while the book was still printing, I was invited by Gilbert Murray to write a little book for The Home University Library setting out in popular terms a general outline of my philosophy. This invitation came at a fortunate moment. I was glad to escape from the rigours of symbolic deductive reasoning, and my opinions at that moment had a clear-cut definiteness which they did not have earlier or later and which made them easy to expound in a simple manner. The book had a great success and still sells widely. I think that most philosophers still regard it as an adequate exposition of my opinions.

I find, on re-reading, that there is a great deal in it which I still believe in. I still agree that "knowledge" is not a precise conception, but merges into "probable opinion." I still agree that self-evidence has degrees and that it is possible to know a general proposition without knowing any single instance of its truth—*e.g.*, "all the pairs of numbers that have never been multiplied together have products greater than 1,000." But there are other matters on which my views have undergone important changes. I no longer think that the laws of logic are laws of things; on the contrary, I now regard them as purely linguistic. I no longer think of points, instants, and particles as part of the raw material of the world. What I said about induction in this little book now seems to me very crude. I spoke about universals and our knowledge of them with a confident assurance which I no longer feel, though I have not any new opinions on the subject which I feel prepared to advocate with equal confidence.

Theory of Knowledge

FROM August, 1914, until the end of 1917, I was wholly occupied with matters arising out of my opposition to the war, but by the beginning of 1918 I had become persuaded that there was no further pacifist work that I could usefully do. I wrote as quickly as I could a book, which I had contracted to produce, called *Roads to Freedom*, but when that was out of the way I began again to work at philosophical subjects. The lectures on Logical Atomism I finished just before going to prison. In prison, I wrote first a polemical criticism of Dewey and then the *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*. After this I found my thoughts turning to theory of knowledge and to those parts of psychology and of linguistics which seemed relevant to that subject. This was a more or less permanent change in my philosophical interests,

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The outcome, so far as my own thinking was concerned, is embodied in three books: *Analysis of Mind* (1921); *Inquiry into Meaning and Truth* (1940); *Human Knowledge: Its Scope and Limits* (1948).

At the beginning of this work I had no fixed convictions, but only a certain store of maxims and prejudices. I read widely and found, in the end, as I had with the reading that preceded the *Principles of Mathematics*, that a great part of what I had read was irrelevant to my purposes.

Among the prejudices with which I had started, I should enumerate six as specially important:

First. It seemed to me desirable to emphasise the continuity between animal and human minds. I found it common to protest against intellectualist interpretations of animal behaviour, and with these protests I was in broad agreement, but I thought that the methods adopted in interpreting animal behaviour have much more scope than is usually admitted in interpreting what in human beings would be regarded as "thought" or "knowledge" or "inference." This preconception led me to read a great deal of animal psychology. I found, somewhat to my amusement, that there were two schools in this field of whom the most important representatives were Thorndike, in America, and Köhler, in Germany. It seemed that animals always behave in a manner showing the rightness of the philosophy entertained by the man who observes them. This devastating discovery holds over a wider field. In the 17th century, animals were ferocious, but under the influence of Rousseau they began to exemplify the cult of the Noble Savage which Peacock makes fun of in Sir Oran Hauton. Throughout the reign of Queen Victoria all apes were virtuous monogamists, but during the dissolute twenties their morals underwent a disastrous deterioration. This aspect of animal behaviour, however, did not concern me. What concerned me were the observations on how animals learn. Animals observed by Americans rush about frantically until they hit upon the solution by chance. Animals observed by Germans sit still and scratch their heads until they evolve the solution out of their inner consciousness. I believe both sets of observations to be entirely reliable, and that what an animal will do depends upon the kind of problem you set before it. The net result of my reading in this subject was to make me very wary of extending any theory beyond the region within which observation had confirmed it.

There was one region where there was a very considerable body of precise experimental knowledge. It was the region of Pavlov's observations on conditioned reflexes in dogs. These experiments led to a philosophy called Behaviourism which had a considerable vogue. The gist of this philosophy is that in psychology we are to rely wholly upon external observations and never to accept data for which the evidence is entirely derived from introspection. As a philosophy, I never felt any inclination to accept this view, but, as a method to be pursued as far as possible, I thought it valuable. I determined in advance that I would push it as far as possible while remaining persuaded that it had very definite limits.

Second. Along with the prejudice in favour of behaviourist methods there went another prejudice in favour of explanations in terms of physics wherever possible. I have always been deeply persuaded that, from a cosmic point of view, life and experience are causally of little importance. The world of astronomy dominates my imagination and I am very conscious of the minuteness of our planet in comparison with the systems of galaxies. I found in Ramsey's *Foundations of Mathematics* a passage expressing what I do *not* feel:

> Where I seem to differ from some of my friends is in attaching little importance to physical size. I don't feel the least humble before the vastness of the heavens. The stars may be large, but they cannot think or love; and these are qualities which impress me far more than size does. I take no credit for weighing nearly seventeen stone.
>
> My picture of the world is drawn in perspective, and not like a model to scale. The foreground is occupied by human beings and the stars are all as small as threepenny bits. I don't really believe in astronomy, except as a complicated description of part of the course of human and possibly animal sensation. I apply my perspective not merely to space but also to time. In time the world will cool and everything will die; but that is a long time off still, and its present value at compound discount is almost nothing. Nor is the present less valuable because the future will be blank. Humanity, which fills the foreground of my picture, I find interesting and on the whole admirable.

There is no arguing about feelings, and I do not pretend for a moment that my way of feeling is better than Ramsey's, but it is vastly different. I find little satisfaction in contemplating the human race and its follies. I am

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

happier thinking about the nebula in Andromeda than thinking about Genghis Khan. I cannot, like Kant, put the moral law on the same plane as the starry heavens. The attempt to humanise the cosmos, which underlies the philosophy that calls itself "Idealism," is displeasing to me quite independently of the question whether it is true or false. I have no wish to think that the world results from the lucubrations of Hegel or even of his Celestial Prototype. In any empirical subject-matter I expect, though without complete confidence, that a thorough understanding will reduce the more important causal laws to those of physics, but where the matter is very complex, I doubt the practical feasibility of the reduction.

Third. I feel that the concept of "experience" has been very much over-emphasised, especially in the Idealist philosophy, but also in many forms of empiricism. I found, when I began to think about theory of knowledge, that none of the philosophers who emphasise "experience" tells us what they mean by the word. They seem willing to accept it as an indefinable of which the significance should be obvious. They tend to think that only what is experienced can be known to exist and that it is meaningless to assert that some things exist although we do not know them to exist. I think that this sort of view gives much too much importance to knowledge, or at any rate to something analogous to knowledge. I think also that those who profess such views have not realised all their implications. Few philosophers seem to understand that one may know a proposition of the form "All A is B" or "There are A's" without knowing any single A individually. If you are on a pebbly beach you may be quite sure that there are pebbles on the beach that you have not seen or touched. Everybody, in fact, accepts innumerable propositions about things not experienced, but when people begin to philosophise they seem to think it necessary to make themselves artificially stupid. I will admit at once that there are difficulties in explaining how we acquire knowledge that transcends experience, but I think the view that we have no such knowledge is utterly untenable.

Fourth. I had, and have, another prejudice which works in the opposite direction from the one we have just been considering. I think that all knowledge as to what there is in the world, if it does not directly report facts known through perception or memory, must be inferred from premisses of which one, at least, is known by perception or memory. I do not think that there is any wholly *a priori* method of improving the existence of anything, but I do think that there are forms of probable inference which must be accepted although they cannot be *proved* by experience.

Fifth. One of the things that I realised in 1918 was that I had not paid enough attention to "meaning" and to linguistic problems generally. It was then that I began to be aware of the many problems concerned with the relation between words and things. There is first the classification of single words: proper names, adjectives, relation words, conjunctions, and such words as "all" and "some." Then there is the question of the significance of sentences and how it comes about that they have the duality of truth and falsehood. I found that, just as there are formalists in arithmetic, who are content to lay down rules for doing sums without reflecting that numbers have to be used in counting, so there are formalists in the wider field of language in general who think that truth is a matter of following certain rules and not of correspondence with fact. Many philosophers speak critically of the "correspondence theory" of truth, but it always seemed to me that, except in logic and mathematics, no other theory had any chance of being right.

I thought, also, as a consequence of my desire to preserve continuity with animal intelligence, that the importance of language, great as it is, has been over-emphasised. It seemed to me that belief and knowledge have pre-verbal forms, and that they cannot be rightly analysed if this is not realised.

When I first became interested in linguistic problems, I did not at all apprehend their difficulty and complexity. I had only the feeling that they were important, without at first knowing quite what they were. I do not pretend to have arrived at any completeness of knowledge in this sphere, but at any rate my thinking has gradually become more articulated, more definite, and more conscious of the problems involved.

Sixth. This brings me to the last of my initial prejudices, which has been perhaps the most important in all my thinking. This is concerned with method. My method invariably is to start from something vague but puzzling, something which seems indubitable but which I cannot express with any precision. I go through a process which is like that of first seeing something with

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the naked eye and then examining it through a microscope. I find that by fixity of attention divisions and distinctions appear where none at first was visible, just as through a microscope you can see the bacilli in impure water which *without* the microscope are *not* discernible. There are many who decry analysis, but it has seemed to me evident, as in the case of the impure water, that analysis gives new knowledge without destroying any of the previously existing knowledge. This applies not only to the structure of physical things, but quite as much to concepts. "Knowledge," for example, as commonly used is a very imprecise term covering a number of different things and a number of stages from certainty to slight probability.

It seems to me that philosophical investigation, as far as I have experience of it, starts from that curious and unsatisfactory state of mind in which one feels complete certainty without being able to say what one is certain of. The process that results from prolonged attention is just like that of watching an object approaching through a thick fog: at first it is only a vague darkness, but as it approaches articulations appear and one discovers that it is a man or a woman, or a horse or a cow or what not. It seems to me that those who object to analysis would wish us to be content with the initial dark blur. Belief in the above process is my strongest and most unshakable prejudice as regards the methods of philosophical investigation.

Language

PHILOSOPHERS and bookish people generally tend to live a life dominated by words and even to forget that it is the essential function of words to have a connection of one sort or another with facts, which are in general non-linguistic. Some modern philosophers have gone so far as to say that words should never be confronted with facts but should live in a pure, autonomous world where they are compared only with other words. When you say, "the cat is a carnivorous animal," you do not mean that actual cats eat actual meat, but only that in zoology books the cat is classified among carnivora. These authors tell us that the attempt to confront language with fact is "metaphysics" and is on this ground to be condemned. This is one of those views which are so absurd that only very learned men could possibly adopt them. What makes it peculiarly absurd is its blindness to the position of language in a world of fact. Language consists of sensible phenomena just as much as eating or walking, and if we can know nothing about facts we cannot know what other people say or even what we are saying ourselves. Language, like other acquired ways of behaving, consists of useful habits and has none of the mystery with which it is often surrounded.

I do not think it is possible to construct a tenable theory of truth and falsehood without certain presuppositions which many modern philosophers consider unduly metaphysical. I think one must say that there are *facts* and that "truth" consists in one sort of relation to facts while "falsehood" consists in another sort of relation. I think the kind of modest agnosticism which pretends that we never know facts is absurd. To pretend that I do not know when I am feeling pain, or when I hear a noise, or see the sun, is the kind of thing that is only possible for those in whom theory has killed all sense of reality. Moreover, even the most passionate adherents of the view that I am rejecting, will admit that sentences consist of words, and cannot well deny that uttering or hearing a sentence is a fact of just the kind that they regard as unknowable. Language is a form of bodily behaviour like walking or eating or drinking, and whatever we cannot know about walking or eating or drinking we also cannot know about language.

Throughout my philosophical development since abandoning monism, I have retained, in spite of changes, certain fundamental beliefs, which I do not know how to demonstrate, but which I cannot bring myself to doubt. The first of these, which seems so obvious that I should blush to mention it but for the circumstance that the contrary opinion has been maintained, is that "truth" depends upon some kind of relation to "fact." The second is that the world consists of many interrelated things. The third is that syntax—*i.e.*, the structure of sentences—must have some relation to the structure of facts, at any rate in those aspects of syntax which are unavoidable and not peculiar to this or that language. Lastly, there is a principle of which I feel less certain, but which I wish to adhere to except where very powerful considerations compel me to depart from it. This is the principle that what can be said about a complex can be said without mentioning it by setting forth its parts and their mutual relations.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

These assumptions were implicit in the symbolism of *Principia Mathematica*. This symbolism assumed that there are "things" which have properties and have, also, relations to other "things." I employed, at first, two fundamental kinds of syntactical symbolism, the first stating that a "thing" is a member of a class, the second stating that one "thing" has such and such a relation to another "thing." I employed small Latin letters for "things," small Greek letters for classes, and capital Latin letters for relations. Classes, however, were gradually more and more replaced by properties, and in the end disappeared except as a symbolic convenience.

My views at that time had a kind of morning innocence which they lost in the labour and heat of the day.

On the very controversial question of a logical language: a logical language, as I conceived it, would be one in which everything that we might wish to say in the way of propositions that are intelligible to us, could be said, and in which, further, structure would always be made explicit. We should need in such a language, words expressing structure, but we should also need words denoting the terms that have the structure. These latter terms, so I maintained, would be denoted by proper names. I thought that the construction of such a language would be a great help to clear thinking, though I never thought that such a language would be suitable for the purposes of daily life. At one time, Wittgenstein agreed with me in thinking that a logical language would be useful in philosophy, and I attributed this view to him in the introduction which I wrote to his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Unfortunately, by this time, he had not only abandoned the view, but had apparently forgotten that he ever held it. What I said about it therefore appeared to him as a misrepresentation. His followers ever since have vehemently rejected the suggestion that a logical language could possibly be useful.

On one important point, I am prepared to concede that their criticisms are just. I believed, originally, with Leibniz, that everything complex is composed of simples, and that it is important in considering analysis to regard simples as our goal. I have come to think, however, that, although many things can be known to be complex, nothing can be *known* to be simple, and, moreover, that statements in which complexes are named can be completely accurate, in spite of the fact that the complexes are not recognised as complex. Many scientific advances consist in the recognition that what has been thought simple is complex: for example, molecules are composed of atoms, and atoms have a structure which has been becoming known in recent years. But, so long as we abstain from asserting that the thing we are considering is simple, nothing that we say about it need be falsified by the subsequent discovery of complexity. It follows that the whole question whether there are simples to be reached by analysis is unnecessary.

Final Objections

It is not an altogether pleasant experience to find oneself regarded as antiquated after having been, for a time, in the fashion. It is difficult to accept this experience gracefully. When Leibniz, in old age, heard the praises of Berkeley, he remarked: "The young man in Ireland who disputes the reality of bodies seems neither to explain himself sufficiently nor to produce adequate arguments. I suspect him of wishing to be known for his paradoxes." I could not say quite the same of Wittgenstein, by whom I was superseded in the opinion of many British philosophers. It was not by paradoxes that *he* wished to be known, but by a suave evasion of paradoxes. He was a very singular man, and I doubt whether his disciples knew what manner of man he was.

There are two great men in history whom he somewhat resembles. One was Pascal, the other was Tolstoy. Pascal was a mathematician of genius, but abandoned mathematics for piety. Tolstoy sacrificed his genius as a writer to a kind of bogus humility which made him prefer peasants to educated men and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to all other works of fiction. Wittgenstein, who could play with metaphysical intricacies as cleverly as Pascal with hexagons or Tolstoy with Emperors, threw away this talent and debased himself before common-sense as Tolstoy debased himself before the peasants—in each case from an impulse of pride. I admired Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* but not his later work, which seemed to me to involve an abnegation of his own best talent very similar to those of Pascal and Tolstoy.

One of the matters which the new philosophy does not like to see submitted to analytic treatment is the nature of empirical evidence. I think

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

part of the difficulty arises from the fact that when people start to do philosophy they think they must forget common-sense. We all of us believe in the existence of the things which we see, such as tables and chairs and houses and the sun and moon, but we know also, if we stop to think, that we are sometimes mistaken in such beliefs. Common-sense enables us, as a rule, to correct such mistakes, for example, when we wake up from a dream. But the methods of common sense, though valid as a rule, are not infallible and depend upon the nature of a man's experience. If you had no experience of broadcasting and you heard a man's voice coming from the next room, you would have no doubt that there was a man there. Some restaurants produce an impression of vastness by means of mirrors and, if you do not look carefully, you may easily think that the reflections are "real." When you are tired you may hear a buzzing noise exactly like that of telegraph wires in a wind, and when you are mad you may hear voices uttering whole sentences in the imperative. The problem of illusions of sense is an ancient one which has come down to us from Greek times. Up to a point, I repeat, it can be decided by common-sense. And up to this point, the new philosophy would raise no objections. But if you attempt to be a little more precise and to arrive at principles for the avoidance of illusion, you will be told that you are indulging in metaphysics. In fact, it is regarded as a sin to think seriously about the problem of perception. There is a great body of scientific work by physicists, physiologists, and psychologists tracing out the causal chains which intervene between an object and the perceiving of it. Although this work is done in the name of science and not of philosophy, many philosophers who profess to reject philosophy in favour of science choose to ignore it. By ignoring it they fall into errors which are only concealed from them by their resolute refusal to analyse.

The word "experience" is used very loosely in philosophy, and hardly any philosophers have taken the trouble to assign a definite meaning to it. The relation of empirical knowledge to experience is one of those problems best treated by beginning with something vague but indubitable and proceeding by scrutiny to prove that the vague something involves something much more precise but *prima facie* much less indubitable. Let us begin by what is vague but indubitable. We all believe without hesitation a host of propositions which we have come to believe in virtue of things that have happened to us. We believe that there is such a place as Cape Horn and that the Norman Conquest occurred in 1066. Why do we believe these things? We believe them because we have heard or seen them asserted. If we had never heard or seen these assertions, we should not know what they assert. But hearing and seeing are kinds of sensations. Thus, even in regard to what is distant in time or space, what we consider ourselves to know depends, not for its truth but for our knowing of it, upon sensations of our own. I think it may be said without any exception or qualification that every piece of empirical knowledge that a given person possesses, he would not possess but for some sensation or sensations in his own life. This, I should say, is the essential truth upon which empiricists rely.

We must here make a distinction. I do not mean to say that when I see a table I say to myself: "I have a certain visual sensation and I believe this sensation to have an external cause, namely what I call a table." This, of course, is not what happens. I believe in the table as an external object at the moment when I have the sensation. The sensation is an indispensable part of the *cause* of my belief, but need be no part of what I am believing. Owing, however, to experience of the illusions of sense I may come to know that what I am believing as an effect of my present sensation is sometimes mistaken. I think I could agree with the philosophers whom I am criticising in rejecting that sort of wholesale and indiscriminating scepticism which, because of occasional illusions of sense, rejects sensation wholly as a source of knowledge about things other than itself. Where I disagree with the new philosophy is that I think it worth while to find out when and in what respects sensation is likely for scientific reasons to prove misleading, and, further, what general principles are implied in our common rejection of wholesale scepticism as to the knowledge of the external world to be derived from our own sensations.

This brings me to the second of my points. Physics and physiology make it plain that if we know anything of the external world we know of it only because of causal chains proceeding from it to our own nerves and brain. We know of it, that is to say, as the unexperienced cause of experienced effects. To this theory it is objected that a kind of cause which must be un-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

experienced can never be validly inferred. Those who say this incur, in my opinion, two kinds of error: on the one hand, the error already noted of supposing that we cannot know a proposition of the form "All A is B" except through experience of As; the other, of failing to note the absolutely devastating consequences of denying the possibility of inference to what cannot be experienced. I do not find in the new philosophy any awareness of the problems which thus arise. It is possible that the new philosophy might be able to find an answer, but so far it has made no attempt to do so. Indeed, whenever it comes up against a difficulty, it seems to deal with it as the March Hare did by saying, "I'm tired of this. Suppose we change the subject."

There have always been those who objected to analysis. They have been the same people as those who opposed every scientific advance. If they had lived when people were beginning to question the belief that earth, air, fire, and water are the four elements, they would have deprecated as contrary to common-sense and common usage every scientific approach to a more adequate analysis of matter. All the advances of modern physics have consisted in a more and more minute analysis of the material world. Atoms at first were considered almost unbelievably small, but to the modern physicist each atom is a complicated world like the solar system. No man of science would dream of questioning the propriety of analysis. At the very beginning of the first chapter of a book recently published, I find the sentence: "What is the nature of the prime materials of the simple bricks of which all matter is built?" It is not only in relation to matter that analysis is the road to understanding. A person without musical training, if he hears a symphony, acquires a vague general impression of a whole, whereas the conductor, as you may see from his gestures, is hearing a total which he minutely analyses into its several parts. The merit of analysis is that it gives knowledge not otherwise obtainable. When you learn that water consists of two parts of hydrogen to one of oxygen, you do not cease to know anything that you knew before about water, but you do acquire the power to know many things that an un-analytic observation could not teach you. If one had been brought up to use Chinese ideograms, should one then have vehemently opposed the phonetic analysis which led to the invention of the alphabet? To advance such considerations in defence of philosophical analysis is not, of course, to say that this or that philosopher has analysed rightly. It is only to say that he was right to attempt an analysis.

ALTHOUGH I feel strongly about the importance of analysis, this is not the most serious of my objections to the new philosophy. The most serious of my objections is that the new philosophy seems to me to have abandoned, without necessity, that grave and important task which philosophy throughout the ages has hitherto pursued. Philosophers from Thales onwards have tried to understand the world. Most of them have been unduly optimistic as regards their own successes. But even when they have failed, they have supplied material to their successors and an incentive to new effort. I cannot feel that the new philosophy is carrying on this tradition. It seems to concern itself, not with the world and our relation to it, but only with the different ways in which silly people can say silly things. If this is all that philosophy has to offer, I cannot think that it is a worthy subject of study. The only reason that I can imagine for the restriction of philosophy to such triviality is the desire to separate it sharply from empirical science. I do not think such a separation can be usefully made. A philosophy which is to have any value should be built upon a wide and firm foundation of knowledge that is not specifically philosophical. Such knowledge is the soil from which the tree of philosophy derives its vigour. Philosophy which does not draw nourishment from this soil will soon wither and cease to grow.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

F. W. Dupee

"Lolita" in America

Literary Letter from New York

SEEING copies of *Lolita* in the bookstores here at the end of last summer, in a regular American edition with no conditions attached to its sale but the $5 price on its cover, was a curious experience for anyone with a prior knowledge of this magnificently outrageous novel and its earlier history. And what has happened to the book since—its conquest of the top place on the best-seller lists—as well as what has *not* happened to it so far—the failure of the expected opposition to materialise—makes another chapter of surprises.

But the surprises are getting to be an old story. Only three years of age, going on four, Vladimir Nabokov's little masterpiece has had a paradoxical history since its first appearance in print, in 1955, by way of an edition put out by the Olympia Press of Paris. What is in question is obviously not only a novel but a phenomenon, and a many-sided one. Like some flamboyant actress of the old school, *Lolita* has made her way by her personality as well as her art. Besides figuring as a work of literature which excites a variety of serious responses, *Lolita* represents a prodigy of the publishing business, a formidable addition to popular mythology, a major event in the career—already pretty fantastic—of its author.

Its publishing history goes back to the spring of 1954, when, Nabokov writes, "I finished copying the thing out in longhand . . . and at once began casting around for a publisher."* He didn't find one among the four well-known American firms to which he submitted the manuscript by turns. Rejections tended to be decisive even though accompanied as a rule by rueful compliments on the book's undoubted merits. A book that described so vividly the mutual seduction of a middle-aged man and a twelve-year-old girl, as well as the disturbing events that precede and follow it, was likely to scandalise the press, mobilise the pressure groups, and finally bring about the sort of action in the federal courts which doomed Edmund Wilson's *Memoirs of Hecate County* a decade ago. Grotesque improvements were suggested by certain publishers, such as that Lolita be changed into a boy (an item I would include under "mythology" if the author had not vouched for its authenticity). So, refusing compromises, Nabokov turned to the Paris publishers.

IT IS not surprising that the American firms turned the book down in 1954. They would probably have done so even if the author had been as celebrated as William Faulkner. But Nabokov's literary reputation did not then, one gathers, make him a particularly good risk, whatever the nature of the book he offered. Admirable but rather scattered, his work in English—as distinguished from his many earlier writings in Russian, French, and German, all virtually unknown here—consisted for the most part of *Bend Sinister* and *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight*, two novels which seemed to belong to the then obsolescent category of avant-garde writing; a critical book on Gogol which defied the prevailing modes of criticism); and *Speak Memory* (*Conclusive Evidence*, in the American edition), a volume of memoirs of the author's Russian childhood, which had always

* This, like other quotations from the author that follow, is from "On a Book Entitled *Lolita*," which Nabokov wrote to accompany some selections from the novel that appeared in *The Anchor Review* (June 1957), and which is also appended to the present "official" edition, published by G. P. Putnam's Sons (New York). There is also the pamphlet, *L'Affaire Lolita: Défense d'Écrivain*, The Olympia Press (Paris, 1957).

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the reputation of being very beautiful and penetrating but was not exactly a public triumph.

So much for the fear of censorship and the comparative obscurity of Nabokov considered as probable reasons for the rejection of *Lolita* by publishers here. There was also a general literary situation which, although it may not have influenced them, ought to be taken into account, because it provided some of the background for the novel's subsequent success and because it probably affected to some extent the nature of the novel itself. Nabokov and his book were at odds with the general literary situation in at least two ways. In his personal and literary antecedents Nabokov was a hybrid, an unregenerate cosmopolitan, in a period which had gone native with a vengeance. By "gone native" I mean "become preoccupied with the national origins of literature, convinced of the sanctity of tribal traditions." The re-discovery of the ancestral Anglo-American pattern came first. Here was a neglected fireside which could be made to give out heat again; and the most prodigal of prodigal sons, all the old wanderers from Henry James to D. H. Lawrence, were hustled back there to be warmed. But any fireside would do for which a Great Tradition, a moral centre, could be claimed, with whatever disregard for the complexities of the particular case or of literary inspiration in general. And just as the "idea of the nation," in one critic's phrase, was thus rehabilitated, so the word "moral" became compulsory in criticism. Into this situation Nabokov failed to fit at all, not because of his actually mixed origins but because they show in his work, are proudly explicit in it, help to make it what it is. Where to place Nabokov, of whom someone has said that he is "Dostoevsky crossed with Voltaire," especially since this brilliant example of hybridisation resulted in *Lolita*, a book too shocking for any great tradition to want to own? Enter here the second negative consideration. *Lolita* was notoriously about sex and murder, subjects which modern American fiction had seemed to make compulsory on its side. Better a new William Dean Howells with his smiling horizons than another writer of the violent *Sanctuary* type. Indeed William Faulkner did not become the enormously respectable figure he now is until he had been naturalised, as it were, under the rubric of the "Southern Myth" and photographed at his ease in his home-town square between the Jail and the Courthouse. Nor did his violences become fully acceptable until they had been moralised, so to speak, as "melodrama." I would myself have predicted, at that time, that the next really new novel would not even be melodrama but would glorify those "common routines" which Mr. Lionel Trilling once tasked Mr. Eliot with having condemned; it would be a sort of sophisticated *Little Women*.

Not that *Lolita* is really without its complicated relations to the sentiments of those years, although the opposite would seem to be true. If, as a reviewer has recently said, "the mind behind it is so original that it might have arrived here by flying saucer," that mind has nevertheless had us under observation from afar. Here, in *Lolita*, are the common routines in plenty: the American small town, the house with the Van Gogh prints, the humdrum poetry of cars, schools, neighbours, swimming lakes and country inns, the women big and little. Here also is melodrama, but of so bitter a kind that the label doesn't sweeten it. The melodrama turns this country of common routines into Lolitaland, a world of obscene innuendo, where the notices posted in motel bathrooms are cautionary come-ons, and the very highway signs are helpful-sinister. This raffish conjunction of the ordinary and the ghastly wasn't what influential people had in mind for the novel in 1954. No wonder the present victory of *Lolita* and its author could not be foreseen by American publishers when the manuscript was first submitted to them.

By itself, melodrama is only disappointed tragedy, inviting laughter. This, at least, is the way Nabokov seems to understand it, aided perhaps by the mating in him of Dostoevsky and Voltaire (or whatever pair of opposites). The American *pur sang* comes up with *The Bad Seed*. But Nabokov did not arrive by flying saucer, even figuratively. He came from nearer by, and *Lolita*, as I have suggested, was highly relevant in 1954, in the ironic way that original works are apt to be relevant to received opinion at any given time. A resident of the United States since 1940, a citizen for several years, the author has long made this country the centre of his life and observation, even submitting to the common routine of being an artist-in-residence (he teaches literature at Cornell University). Furthermore, the present book had been in his mind for many years.

"The first little throb of *Lolita* went through

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

me in 1939," he says. He then lived in Paris, after having spent his youth in his native Russia, exiling himself in 1919 from the Revolution which had demolished the aristocracy he belonged to and undone his father, the famous Liberal statesman. For *Lolita*, "the initial shiver of inspiration was somehow prompted by a newspaper story about an ape in the Jardin des Plantes who, after months of coaxing by a scientist, produced the first drawing ever charcoaled by an animal: the sketch showed the bars of the poor creature's cage." This too Kafka-like inspiration led to a thirty-page story with an all-French setting, the prototype of Lolita being of that nationality while the original of Humbert Humbert, her *homme fatal*, was a Central European. In this form the story didn't satisfy the author. Some infusion of radically new experience seems to have been needed, and evidently his coming to America supplied it. "Around 1949, in Ithaca, upstate New York [seat of Cornell University], the throbbing, which had never quite ceased, began to plague me again." But now he wrote in English and what he began to bring forth "was new and had grown in secret the claws and wings of a novel." Much of it was written while he was on summer tours in the far West in his capacity as a part-time lepidopterist. While hunting rare butterflies in this cross-country fashion, he undoubtedly collected many specimens of common *vita Americana* for his novel.

Thus, from the point of view of Nabokov's development as a writer, *Lolita* probably sums up the process, compounded of fear and fascination, disgust and laughter, by which he has become an American writer. He laughs off such interpretations, and sounds most like a know-nothing native writer when he does so. But as D. H. Lawrence said, "Never trust the artist. Trust the tale." Trusting the tale in this case means seeing that Nabokov's naturalisation has been on his own terms and is a triumph.

MEANWHILE *Lolita* passed from his mind into literary and publishing history, and soon into myth, when it found a sponsor in the Olympia Press of Paris. Assorted works in English, some belonging to the category of frank erotica, a few to that of literature as well, are the speciality of this house. Out of *Lolita* it made an attractive pair of volumes, which some tourists began to bring home, while people at home began to order them by mail, often under the impression that another *Ulysses* or *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was being sneaked past the United States Customs. But one of *Lolita*'s many surprises was in store for them. In response to a query from the Olympia Press, the Collector of Customs in New York City replied that "certain copies of this book have been before this Office and that they have been released." Surprise turned into large-scale paradox when it became known that the book released by the traditionally strict American authorities was suddenly under a sort of ban in traditionally free-for-all Paris. Acting on an order signed by the French Minister of the Interior, as of December 10th, 1956, the Paris police had descended upon the Olympia Press, prohibiting the further sale and circulation on French territory of twenty-five titles, including *Lolita*, published by that firm. An appeal to the Ministry by a legal representative of the Press brought a belated reply, saying plainly, over an illegible signature, that "la mesure d'interdiction visant les dites publications" must stand. An appeal was also made to the *Syndicat National des Éditeurs*, but this powerful organisation of publishers stood by the Ministry just as the Ministry stood by the police. As sanction for their act, the authorities cited certain French statutes relating to the immunities and responsibilities of the press. But the Olympia Press was able to produce, and to reproduce in print, a letter headed "Home Office, Whitehall, Ministry of the Interior," dated September 3rd, 1953, and addressed to the *Section des Services de la Police Judiciare* of the French Ministry, calling attention to the International Convention for the Suppression of Obscene Publications and charging the Olympia Press with sending by post "des livres d'un caractère hautement obscène."

THE *gendarmes* were unwelcome enough in themselves; but the possibility that they had been set in motion by the British Home Office, after whatever lapse of time, made a literary scandal in France. The Olympia issued *L'Affaire Lolita*, a pamphlet containing the relevant documents as well as various appeals to traditional French liberty. The response of writers everywhere was warmly sympathetic. And presently the Olympia Press was able to resume business, under a curious compromise evolved by the ministry. *Lolita* and the rest of her prohibited sisterhood could be sold, on the premises and by mail, but they could not be exhibited in the windows or otherwise advertised.

It was in the glare of these international

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ironies that *Lolita* came to the attention of the American press at large, most notably *Time* magazine, which made all the ironies plain in an article on the case (March 17th, 1957). Considering so much publicity, an American publisher could now probably take the chance of bringing the book out in the regular way in this country. Indeed the respectably sponsored *Anchor Review* not only got away with printing large sections of *Lolita*, together with my own detailed commentary, but also got enthusiastic reviews in many different quarters. What had formerly seemed a wonderful literary curiosity now began to be spoken of as an absolute masterpiece. It had its detractors too, and they sounded just angry or hurt enough to provide a further stimulus to interest.

With its publication here last August by the dignified firm of G. P. Putnam's Sons, *Lolita* therefore quickly became the best-seller it still is at this writing. Inevitably, yet surprisingly again (considering the grim subject), the movie rights were acquired—for the usual "sum in six figures"—by the independent producers, James B. Harris and Stanley Kubrick, Inc. These gentlemen are reported to be busy on the phone all day coping with Hollywood mothers who would like to see their youngest daughters in the leading rôle. Serio-comic speculations as to what the movie-makers will do to make *Lolita* palatable, stories of all kinds and all degrees of veracity, public controversies more or less earnest, witticisms delivered in print and in conversation, make up what I call the "mythology" of *Lolita*. But the mythology tends to be self-defeating, for reasons having to do with the nature of the book itself. *Lolita* is like Falstaff to the extent, at least, of being the cause that others *feel* witty. But what can others produce in this way that Humbert Humbert, the humbugging hero and purported author of the book, hasn't anticipated, hasn't said better? One's *double-entendres* have a way of being turned against one by that far more resounding frame of reference. He is as knowing, or more so, than the people who, inspired by a remark in the charming review of the book in the Sunday New York *Times*, have been filling the correspondence columns of that paper with news of the girl-child cult from Dante to Lewis Carroll. So, too, with Humbert's language. "Nymphet" and other new words, old words in shady new senses, are being fed into the vernacular by that eloquent source, without their ever meaning half as much mischief as they mean in the original. Even the innocently intended remarks one hears or reads on the subject often seem to have been invented by Nabokov's hero, in a lesser moment. A firm that specialises in advising libraries on purchases writes (I have its filing card on *Lolita* before me): "Thousands of library patrons conditioned to near-incest by *Peyton Place* may take this in their stride. However, better read before buying." This is minor Humbert. Nor does a woman pleasantly reviewing the book in the Cedar Rapids (Iowa) *Gazette* improve on his mastery of the dying fall when she says: "The writing is pure delight, the syntax admirable."

PURE or not, the delight given by the book appears to have exceeded any distress it has caused, thus immobilising the opposition. That there would be opposition and that it would try to take action seems to have been expected on all sides. A state of nerves braced by conscious courage may be felt in many of the early reviews, from New York to Texas. The courage seems to have had its effect, especially as represented in such a widely syndicated notice as that by W. G. Rogers, of the Associated Press, who wrote that *Lolita* is "concerned ostensibly with the flesh but [is] fascinating principally for the brilliant game of the mind." So far as action by censorship is concerned, therefore, *Lolita*'s story is a story without a plot. Two public libraries, those of Newark (New Jersey) and Cincinnati (Ohio), have refused to acquire the book, the director of the latter institution saying that "the theme of perversion seems to me obscene." *Lolita* is still sold in Boston despite some indignant notices in the local papers and despite the demand for a ban made by a Massachusetts state senator. The published advice of Dr. James Alexander Hamilton of the San Francisco Medical Society is probably typical of the more usual approach of disapproving authorities. He proposes that the book be given "the silent treatment" in San Francisco, which "is already a haven for wandering psychotics and goofballs of every description." So far as I can make out, the various religious groups are also applying the formula of silence. A brief, uninformative notice of *Lolita* in *The Catholic World* concludes that it is "a romp which does not amuse."

The Catholic World's refusal to be amused saves the dignity of institutions. It also spares *Lolita* the indignity of a whitewashing. This last has been the book's fate in many quarters where sincere admiration and unexceptionable literary judgment have otherwise prevailed. No doubt it

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Lolita" in London

LOLITA *is about to be published in Britain. Remember* LOLITA? *It is the pornographic novel recording in salacious detail the exploits of a middle-aged seducer of young girls, which on its publication in Paris Mr. Graham Greene recommended to unsuspecting readers of the sedate* Sunday Times *as good stuff.*

It has since been an immense money-making success in the U.S., where, of course, the pornography market is wide and profitable.

I hardly think the British publisher will find the market here so open and easy.

JOHN GORDON, SUNDAY EXPRESS

MR. R. JENKINS (*Lab., Stechford*) *referred to the difficulty of striking a balance between not allowing licence for pornography and giving reasonable security to literature of value. There was a more flourishing pornography trade here than in any other country—and a greater lack of security for genuine literature.*

He understood there was a proposal by a reputable firm to publish a book called "LOLITA" *which had sold 240,000 copies in the United States.*

SIR GODFREY NICHOLSON (*C., Farnham*): *"It is thoroughly obscene."*

MR. JENKINS: *"I would not say that. It has been treated as a major work of art."*

SIR GODFREY *said he had only read an account in a newspaper. "It is uncontradicted that the book deals with a disgusting, revolting, and cruel vice and tends to encourage it."*

MR. JENKINS *said he was not trying to judge the matter. He was just saying that here was a book which many people considered of great value, which it was proposed to publish here. The debate would be valuable if it led to early legislation....*

MR. BONHAM-CARTER (*Lib., Torrington*) *said that, as a publisher, he found in 1954 that it was difficult to know why one book was chosen for prosecution rather than another. One reason was that the English law appeared to work curiously. Anything to do with sex was automatically dangerous, while anything which described brutality, or violence, or pain was, for some reason, outside the scope of the law altogether.*

MR. N. NICOLSON (*C., Bournemouth E. and Christchurch*), *disclosing an interest as a partner in a firm of publishers, said the publishing profession shared the desire to eradicate pornography.*

His firm was given the opportunity to publish a novel, "LOLITA" *written by a Russian exile who was professor of literature at Cornell University. The novel dealt with a perversion. It described the love of a middle-aged man for a girl of twelve. If this perversion had been described in such a way as to suggest that the practices were pleasant ones, and could lead to happiness, he would have advised against publishing the book. In point of fact,* "LOLITA" *condemned what it described. He had come to the conclusion, therefore, that it was probably right to publish the book....*

MANCHESTER GUARDIAN

"Well," I said, as I closed LOLITA, *"if I were George Weidenfeld I would not publish that...."*

KINGSLEY MARTIN, NEW STATESMAN

It is a remarkable book with a rancid taste. I do not believe it should be banned —because it is clearly a seriously-intended novel far removed from pornography. But I think it is regrettable that so much excited emotionalism should be building up around it—precisely the glare of publicity that may attract the eyes of people searching for twisted kicks.

The prevailing odds in the publishing trade are 60–40 chances of jail.

KENNETH ALLSOP, DAILY MAIL

Lolita *is not just another of the seamy sex-laden books that publishers sometimes label "controversial." It is one of the most extraordinary pieces of pornography ever written. However could a publisher think of issuing such a book? ...*

It has been suggested that books, when you come to think of it, cannot really do harm to people who are intelligent enough to read them. What an extraordinary sentiment from the literary world that is....

For Lolita, *as plainly as* Das Kapital *or* Mein Kampf, *is in effect a propagandist book. Every page pulsates with enthusiasm for the perversion which it describes....*

Many of the most enlightened men in Britain's book-world have already denounced Lolita *in blunt terms. So, privately, have most of Britain's publishers, to whom the book was offered. One destroyed the copy which was sent him. Another threatened to resign from his firm if they issued the book.*

ROBERT PITMAN, SUNDAY EXPRESS

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was from a fear of scaring their readers and alerting the potential crusaders that many reviewers exercised restraint in reporting the starker aspects of *Lolita* considered as an imaginative experience. The tendency has been, as with W. G. Rogers, to leap athletically from the flesh to the word game. A review of the American edition in *Time* came to the consoling conclusion, missed by *The Catholic World*, that "Nabokov seems to be asserting that all of Creation is God." A Comic Masterpiece—again and again reviewers have arrived at something like this ultimate tribute without traversing the exquisitely painful ground between, the rank necessary purlieus of disgust and horror in *Lolita*. The book, they tend to say, is not pornographic, having no four-letter words in it. And again Humbert Humbert can be heard to laugh, this time at such saving formalities. In the person of his author he has been heard to say that pornography is only "the copulation of clichés"; there are worse things. He has also expressed amazement at the tendency of some of the best critics to get out on their favourite limbs—moral, metaphysical, or mythic—while trying to prune *Lolita* to shape. Trusting the tale means sticking to it. What he would say of Lionel Trilling's sober appraisal (ENCOUNTER, October 1958) can't be guessed. For this critic, the grimnesses of *Lolita*, to which he does full justice, are redeemed by its being about Love, a neglected subject in our merely sex-ridden literature, and he doesn't seem to allow the book a single laugh.

In his reserves concerning the book's stature, however, Mr. Trilling is more compelling than most of the outright enemies of *Lolita* have been. They have put on a poor show, lacking the theoretical equipment for a good attack, not to mention the rhetorical force, and falling back on the weakest strategies. These consist for the most part either in rude plain-speaking ("disgusting") or in attempts to sound superior and bored ("achingly tedious," "dull, dull, dull"). Both devices are so personal that they are likely to provoke only personal responses from the reader; and when the man who says "dull, dull, dull" happens to be the not famously brilliant daily reviewer of the New York *Times*, Orville Prescott, the reaction can be explosive.

THE admirers of the book have certainly had the best of it, for several reasons. *Lolita* is a wonderful novel, however you take it. It acts with intricate force on anyone who lets himself be acted on. It has also had the luck to make its American appearance at just the right moment. The state of literary feeling—to speak only of that—has been undergoing something of a change here during the past year, from a kind of yearning conservatism to a kind of yearning dissidence. *Lolita* has both profited by the change and helped to crystallise it. There have been many similar manifestations; but no other novel, no periodical or work of criticism, no group of like-minded writers acting in concert, has done so much. *Lolita* works its magic in circles where the efforts of the Beat Generation, for example, pass for only further symptoms—there are so many already. Moreover, those approving circles are not exclusively made up of any of the familiar types into which literary Americans are commonly said to fall. All the brows—high, middle, and low—are to be found in them, celebrating together. It was someone writing in racy obscurity in the Louisville *Courier-Journal* who described *Lolita* as "undoubtedly one of the great comic novels of all time." It was a well-known younger critic writing with the conscious austerity of his kind (and in *The New Republic*) who called the book "a major literary event, worth all the attention we can spare." It was the book editor of the middling *Atlantic Monthly* who called it "an assertion of the comic spirit to wrest delight and truth from the most outlandish materials." It was a quite unclassifiable voice in the Milwaukee *Journal* that spoke out for Nabokov's style: "sparkling and volatile, a marvel beyond the reach of most of our own best writers." Nor are the detractors to be found only where one would expect to find them. They are in the fairly advanced *Nation* and, of all places, the Greenwich Village *Voice*, as well as in the newspapers of Dallas and Worcester. The old ranks will undoubtedly form again over other issues. Meanwhile, *Lolita* has contributed to a spectacle which many assorted individuals find irresistible. It has helped to make the fading smile of the Eisenhower Age give way to a terrible grin.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Arthur Koestler

The Sleepwalker

Johannes Kepler, and the Psychology of Discovery (III)

Computing a Bride

ONLY one circumstance, but a basic one, relieved the gloom of Kepler's later years: his second marriage, in 1613, to Susanna Reuttinger. He was forty-one, she twenty-four, the daughter of a cabinet-maker. Susanna's parents had died while she was a child; she had been brought up in the household of the Baroness Starhemberg. We do not know what position she occupied in the household, but to judge by the scandalised reactions of Kepler's correspondents, it must have been a lowly one—something between a maid and a companion.

Kepler's first marriage had been engineered by his well-wishers when he was an inexperienced and penniless young teacher. Before his second marriage, friends and go-betweens again played a prominent part—but this time Kepler had to choose between no less than eleven candidates for his hand. In a letter to an unknown nobleman, which extends to eight printed folio pages, Kepler has described in meticulous detail the process of elimination and selection that he followed. It is a curious document, and among the most revealing in his voluminous writings. It shows that he solved the problem of choosing the right wife among the eleven candidates by much the same methods by which he found the orbit of Mars: he committed a series of mistakes which might have proved fatal, but cancelled out; and up to the last moment he failed to realise that he held the correct solution in his hands.

The letter is dated from Linz, October 23rd, 1613:

> Though all Christians start a wedding invitation by solemnly declaring that their marriage is due to special Divine management, I as a philosopher, would like to discourse with you, O wisest of men, in greater detail about this. Was it Divine Providence or my own moral guilt which, for two years or longer, tore me in so many different directions and made me consider the possibilities of such different unions? If it was Divine Providence, to what purpose did it use these various personalities and events? For there is nothing that I would like to investigate more thoroughly, and that I more intensely long to know, than this: can I find God, whom I can almost touch with my hands when I contemplate the universe, also in my own self? If, on the other hand, the fault was mine, in what did it consist? Cupidity, lack of judgment, or ignorance? And why, on the other hand, was there nobody among my advisers to approve of my final decision? Why am I losing their previous esteem or appear to be losing it?
>
> What could have seemed more reasonable than that I, as a philosopher, past the peak of virility, at an age when passion is extinct, the body dried and softened by nature, should have married a widow who would look after the household, who was known to me and my first wife, and unmistakably recommended to me by her? But if so, why did nothing come of it? . . .

The reasons why this first project came to nothing were, among others, that the prospective bride had two marriageable daughters, that her fortune was in the hands of a trustee; and, as an afterthought,

> also a consideration of health, because, though her body was strong, it was suspect of ill-health because of her stinking breath; to this came my dubious reputation in matters of religion. . . . In addition to all this, when I met the woman after it had all been settled (I had not seen her for the last six years), there was nothing about her that pleased me. It is therefore sufficiently clear that the matter could not succeed. But why did God permit that I should be occupied with this project which was doomed to failure? Perhaps to prevent my getting involved in other perplexities while my thoughts were on this person? . . . I believe that things like this happen to others too, not only once but often; but the difference is that others do not worry as much as I do, that

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

they forget more easily and get over things quicker than I do; or that they have more self-control and are less credulous than I am.... And now for the others.

Together with the mother, her two daughters were also offered to me—under an unfavourable omen, if an offence to probity can be interpreted as such: for the project was presented by the well-wishers of the ladies in a form which was not very proper. The ugliness of this project upset me intensely; yet I began nevertheless to enquire into the conditions. As I thus transferred my interest from widows to virgins, and continued to think of the absent one [the mother] whom, so far, I had not seen, I was captivated by the appearance and pleasant features of the one who was present [the daughter]. Her education had been, as it became sufficiently clear, more splendid than it would be useful to me. She had been brought up in luxury that was above her station, also she was not of sufficient age to run a household. I decided to submit the reasons which spoke against the marriage to the judgment of the mother, who was a wise woman and loved her daughter. But it would have been better if I had not done so, because the mother did not seem to be pleased. This was the second one, and now I come to the third.

The third was a maiden in Bohemia whom Kepler found attractive, and who took a liking to his orphaned children. He left them for a while in her care "which was a rash act, for later on I had to fetch them back at my own expense." She was willing to marry him, but she had, a year earlier, given her word to another man. That other man had, in the meantime, begotten a child with a prostitute, so that the maiden considered herself free; but she thought it nevertheless necessary to obtain the permission of her ex-fiancé's employer. This employer had some time ago given Kepler a letter of recommendation—and by a mysterious *non-sequitur*, Kepler states that this prevented the marriage. We are left to wonder.

The fourth he would have married gladly, in spite of her "tall stature and athletic build," if meanwhile the fifth had not entered the scene. The fifth was Susanna, his future wife:

> In comparing her to the fourth the advantage was with the latter as regards the reputation of the family, earnestness of expression, property, and dowry; but the fifth had the advantage through her love, and her promise to be modest, thrifty, diligent, and to love her step-children.... While I was waging my long and heavy battle with this problem, I was waiting for the visit of Frau Helmhard, wondering whether she would advise me to marry the third, who would then carry the day over the last-mentioned two. Having at last heard what this woman had to say, I began to decide in favour of the fourth, annoyed that I had to let the fifth go. As I was turning this over, and on the point of making a decision, fate intervened: the fourth got tired of my hesitations and gave her word to another suitor. Just as I had been previously annoyed about having to reject the fifth, I was now so much hurt about the loss of the fourth, that the fifth too began to lose her attraction for me. In this case, to be sure, the fault was in my feelings.
>
> Concerning the fifth, there is also the question why, since she was destined for me, God permitted that in the course of one year, she should have six more rivals? Was there no other way for my uneasy heart to be content with its fate than by realising the impossibility of the fulfilment of so many other desires?

And so to No. 6, who had been recommended to Kepler by his step-daughter:

> A certain nobility, and some possessions made her desirable; on the other hand, she was not old enough, and I feared the expense of a sumptuous wedding; and her noble rank in itself made her suspect of pride. In addition, I felt pity for the fifth, who had already understood what was afoot and what had been decided. This division in me between willingness and unwillingness had, on the one hand, the advantage that it excused me in the eyes of my advisers, but on the other the disadvantage that I was as pained as if I had been rejected... But in this case too, Divine Providence had meant well because the woman would not have fitted in at all with my habits and household.
>
> Now, as the fifth ruled, to my joy, alone in my heart, a fact which I also expressed to her in words, suddenly a new rival arose for her, whom I shall call No. 7—because certain people, whom you know, suspected the humility of the fifth and recommended the noble rank of the seventh. She also had an appearance which deserved to be loved. Again I was prepared to give up the fifth, and to choose the seventh, provided it was true what they said about her....

But again he prevaricated; "and what else could have been the result but a rejection, which I had quasi-provoked?"

Tongues were wagging all over Linz; to avoid more gossip and ridicule, he now turned his attention to a candidate of common origin "who nevertheless aspired to the nobility. Though her appearance had nothing to recommend her, her mother was a most worthy person." But she was as fickle as he was undecided, and after alternately giving him her word and retracting it on seven subsequent occasions, he again thanked Divine Providence and let her go.

His methods now became more cautious and secretive. When he met No. 9, who, apart from a lung disease, had much to recommend her, he pretended to be in love with somebody else, hoping that the candidate's reactions might betray her feelings. Her reactions were promptly to tell Mother, who was ready to give her bless-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing, but Kepler thought she had rejected him and by then it was too late to put matters right.

The tenth was also of noble rank, of sufficient means and thrifty.

> But her features were most abhorrent, and her shape ugly even for a man of simple tastes. The contrast of our bodies was most conspicuous: I thin, dried-up, and meagre; she, short and fat, and coming from a family distinguished by redundant obesity. She was quite unworthy to be compared with the fifth, but this did not revive love for the latter.

The eleventh and last one was again "of noble rank, opulent and thrifty"; but after waiting four months for an answer, Kepler was told that the maiden was not yet sufficiently grown up.

> Having thus exhausted the counsels of all my friends, I, at the last moment before my departure for Rattisbon, returned to the fifth, pledged her my word and received hers.
>
> Now you have my commentary on my remark at the beginning of this invitation. You now see how Divine Providence drove me into these perplexities that I may learn to scorn noble rank, wealth, and parentage, of which she has none, and to seek with equanimity other, simpler virtues. . . .

The letter ends with Kepler entreating his aristocratic friend to come to the wedding banquet and help him by his presence to brave the adversity of public opinion.

Susanna seemed to have justified Kepler's choice, and lived up to his expectations. There is hardly any later mention of her in his letters, and as far as Kepler's domestic life was concerned, no news is good news. She bore him seven children, of whom three died in infancy.

I HAVE said, at the beginning, that Kepler's way of discovering the right wife for himself strangely reminds one of the method of his scientific discoveries. Perhaps, at the end of this matrimonial odyssey, this sounds less far-fetched or whimsical. There is the same characteristic split in the personality between, on the one hand, the pathetically eager, Chaplinesque figure who stumbles from one wrong hypothesis to another and from one candidate to the next—oval orbits, egg-shaped orbits, chubby-faced orbits; who proceeds by trial and error, falls into grotesque traps, analyses with pedantic seriousness each mistake and finds in each a sign of Divine Providence; one can hardly imagine a more painfully humourless performance. But on the other hand, he *did* discover his Laws and *did* make the right choice among the eleven candidates, guided by that sleepwalking intuition which made his waking errors cancel out and always asserted itself at the critical moment. Social rank and financial considerations are topmost in his waking consciousness, yet in the end he married the only candidate who had neither rank, nor money, nor family; and though he anxiously listens to everybody's advice, seems to be easily swayed and without a will of his own, he decides on the person unanimously rejected by all.

It is the same dichotomy which we observed in all his activities and attitudes. In his quarrels with Tycho and constant naggings at him, he displayed embarrassing pettiness. Yet he was curiously devoid of jealousy or lasting resentment. He was proud of his discoveries and often boasted of them (particularly of those which turned out to be worthless), but he had no proprietary feeling about them; he was quite prepared to share the copyright of the three Laws with the Junker Tengnagel and, contrary to the habits of the time, gave in all his books most generous credit to others—to Maestlin, Brahe, Gilbert, and Galileo. He even gave credit where none was due, for instance to Fabricius, whom he nearly saddled with the honour of having discovered the elliptic orbits. He freely informed his correspondents of his latest researches and naïvely expected other astronomers to part with their jealously guarded observations; when they refused, as Tycho and his heirs did, he simply pinched the material without a qualm of conscience. He had, in fact, no sense of private property concerning scientific research. Such an attitude is most unusual among scholars in our day; in Kepler's day it seemed quite insane. But it was the most endearing lunacy in his discordant, fantastic self.

The Last Years

WHEN Kepler was forty-eight, his pioneering work was done; but in the remaining eleven years of his life he continued to pour out books and pamphlets—annual calendars and ephemerides, a book on comets, another on the new invention of logarithms, and two more major works: the *Epitome Astronomiae Copernicanae* and the *Rudolphine Tables*.

The title of the former is misleading. The *Epitome* is not an abstract of the Copernican system, but a text-book of the Keplerian system. The laws which originally referred to Mars only, are here extended to all planets, including the moon and the satellites of Jupiter. The epicycles are all gone, and the solar system emerges in essentially the same shape in which it appears in modern school-books. It was Kepler's most voluminous work and the most important systematic exposition of astronomy since Ptolemy's *Almagest*. The fact that his discoveries are found in it once more side by side with his fantasies, does not detract from its value. It is

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

precisely this overlapping of two universes of thought, which gives the *Epitome*, as it does to the whole of Kepler's life and work, their unique value to the history of ideas.

To realise how far ahead of his colleagues Kepler was, in spite of the residue of mediævalism in his veins, one must compare the *Epitome* with other contemporary text-books. None of them had adopted the heliocentric idea, or was to do so for a generation to come. Maestlin published a reprint of his text-book based on Ptolemy in 1624, three years after the *Epitome*; and Galileo's famous *Dialogue on the Great Systems of the World*, published another eight years later, still holds fast to cycles and epicycles as the only conceivable form of heavenly motion.

The second major work of Kepler's late years was his crowning achievement in practical astronomy: the long-awaited Rudolphine Tables, based on Tycho's lifelong labours. Their completion had been delayed for nearly thirty years by Tycho's death, the quarrel with the heirs, and the chaotic conditions created by the war—but basically by Kepler's reluctance against what one might call a Herculean donkey-work. Astronomers and navigators, calendar-makers and horoscope-casters were impatiently waiting for the promised Tables, and angry complaints about the delay came from as far as India and the Jesuit missionaries in China. When a Venetian correspondent joined in the chorus, Kepler answered with a *cri de cœur*:

> One cannot do everything, as the saying goes. I am unable to work in an orderly manner, to stick to a time schedule and to rules. If I put out something that looks tidy, it has been worked over ten times. Often I am held up for a long time by a computing error committed in haste. But I could pour out an infinity of ideas. . . . I beseech thee, my friends, do not sentence me entirely to the treadmill of mathematical computations, and leave me time for philosophical speculations which are my only delight.

At last, when he had turned the corner of fifty, he really settled down to the task at which he had only nibbled since Tycho's death. In December 1623, he triumphantly reported to an English correspondent, *video portum*—"I can see the harbour"; and six months later to a friend: "The Rudolphine Tables, sired by Tycho Brahe, I have carried in me for twenty-two years, as the seed is gradually developed in the mother's womb. Now I am tortured by the labours of birth."

But owing to lack of money and the chaos of the Thirty Years' War, the printing took no less than four years, and consumed half of his remaining energies and life-span. The story of the printing reminds one of the Ten Egyptian Plagues. To begin with, Linz did not have an adequate printing press for such a major undertaking; so Kepler had to travel again to recruit skilled printers from other towns. When the work at last got going, the next plague descended —a familiar one this time: all Protestants in Linz were ordered either to embrace the Catholic faith, or to leave the town within six months. Kepler was again exempted, and so was his Lutheran master printer with his men; but he was requested to hand over to the authorities all books suspect of heresy. Luckily, the choice of objectionable books was left to his own judgment (which made him feel "as if a bitch were asked to surrender one of her litter") and, thanks to the intervention of the Jesuit Father Guldin, he was able to keep them all. When the war was approaching Linz, the authorities asked Kepler's advice how to protect the books of the Provincial Library against the danger of fire; he recommended packing them tightly into wine barrels so that they could easily be rolled away from the danger spot. Incidentally, notwithstanding his excommunication (now final), Kepler kept paying visits to his beloved Tuebingen, the Lutheran stronghold, and having a jolly time with old Maestlin—all of which goes to show that the sacred cows of that bygone Age of Humanism were still held in respect during the Thirty Years' War, both in Germany and Italy, as the case of Galileo will show.

The third plague was the garrisoning of Linz by Bavarian soldiery. Soldiers were billeted everywhere, even on Kepler's printing shop. This led to a rumour which spread through the Republic of Letters, and penetrated as far as Danzig, that the soldiers had melted down Kepler's lead type to make bullets, and pulped his manuscripts for use as cartridge cases—but luckily this was not true.

Next, the Lutheran peasantry rose in bloody revolt, burnt down monasteries and castles, occupied the township of Wels and laid siege to Linz. The siege lasted for two months, June–August 1626. There were the usual epidemics, and the populace was reduced to living on horseflesh, but Kepler "by the help of God and the protection of my angels" was preserved from this fate.

On June 30th, the peasants succeeded in setting fire to part of the town. It destroyed seventy houses, and among these was the printing shop. All the sheets that had so far been printed went up in flames; but the angels again intervened and Kepler's manuscript escaped unscathed. This provided him with an occasion for one of his endearing understatements: "It is a strange fate which causes these delays all the time. New incidents keep occurring which are not at all my fault."

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Actually, he was not too much aggrieved by the destruction of the printing press, because he had had more than enough of Linz, and was only waiting for a pretext to move elsewhere. He knew of a good press in Ulm, on the upper reaches of the Danube. When the siege was lifted and the Emperor's consent obtained, Kepler was able, after fourteen long years, to leave Linz, which he had never liked, and which had never liked him.

But the printer at Ulm turned out a disappointment. There were quarrels from the start; at one point, Kepler left Ulm in a sudden huff to find a better printer. He travelled on foot, because he again suffered from boils on his backside, which made riding a horse too painful. The time was February, and Kepler was fifty-six. In the village of Blaubeuren, having walked fifteen miles, he turned back and made peace with the printer (whose name was Jonas Sauer, meaning sour).

Seven months later, in September 1627, the work was at long last completed. It was just in time for the annual book mart at the Frankfurt Fair. Kepler, who had bought the paper, cast some of the type, acted as printer's foreman, and paid for the whole enterprise, now travelled himself to Frankfurt, with part of the first edition of a thousand copies, to arrange for its sale. It was truly a one-man show.

The *Tabulae Rudolphinae* remained, for more than a century, an indispensable tool for the study of the skies—both planets and fixed stars. The frontispiece, designed by Kepler's hand, shows a Greek temple, under the columns of which five astronomers are engaged in lively dispute: an ancient Babylonian, Hipparchus, Ptolemy, Canon Copernicus, and Tycho de Brahe. In a wall at the base of the temple, under the five immortals' feet, there is a small niche in which Kepler crouches at a rough-hewn working-table, mournfully gazing at the onlooker, and to all intents like one of Snow-White's Seven Dwarfs. The table-cloth in front of him is covered with numbers, penned by a quill within reach of his hand, indicating the fact that he has no money to buy paper. Over the top of the dome-shaped roof hovers the Imperial Eagle, dropping gold ducats from its beak, a symbol of imperial largesse. Two of the ducats have landed on Kepler's table-cloth, and two more are falling through the air—a hopeful hint.

THE last three years of Kepler's life carry haunting echoes of the legend of the Wandering Jew. *Quis locus eligendus, vastatus an vastandus?*—"What place shall I choose, one that is destroyed, or one that is going to be destroyed?" He had left Linz forever, and he was without a fixed domicile. Ulm was only a temporary station, for the duration of the printing. It looks as if the heritage of his vagrant father and uncles was reasserting itself in his late middle age. His restlessness had found an outlet in creative achievement; when he finished the Rudolphine Tables, the tension snapped, the current was cut off, and he seemed to be free-wheeling in aimless circles, driven on by an ever-growing, overriding anxiety. He had been offered the most coveted Chair in Italy, and Lord Bacon's envoy, Sir Henry Wotton, had invited him to England.* Yet he refused:

> Am I to go overseas where Wotton invites me? I a German? I who love the firm Continent and who shrink at the idea of an island in narrow boundaries of which I feel the dangers in advance?

And when Bernegger tried to cheer him up with the news that a portrait of Kepler was hung up on the wall of the Strasburg University library: "everybody who visits the library sees it. If only they could see you in person!" Kepler's reaction was that the portrait "should be removed from that public place, the more so as it has hardly any likeness to myself."

Wallenstein

IN DECEMBER 1627, Kepler left Ulm for Prague and was received, to his surprise, as *persona grata*. The Court had returned to Prague for the coronation of the Emperor's son as King of Bohemia. Everybody was in high spirits: Wallenstein, the new Hannibal, had expelled the Danish invaders from Prussia; he had overrun Holstein, Schleswig, and Jutland, and the enemies of the Empire were everywhere in retreat. Wallenstein himself had arrived in Prague a few weeks before Kepler; he was awarded, in addition to the Duchy of Friedland which he already held, the Duchy of Sagan in Silesia.

The Emperor's Generalissimo and his Mathematicus had crossed each other's path before. Wallenstein was addicted to astrology. Twenty years earlier, in Prague, Kepler had been requested, by a go-between, to cast the nativity of a young nobleman who wished to remain unnamed. Kepler wrote a brilliant character-analysis of the future war leader, who was then twenty-five, which testifies to his psychological insight—for Kepler had guessed the identity of his anonymous client.† Sixteen years later, he was asked, again through a middle-man, to ex-

* Kepler had dedicated the *Harmonice Mundi* to James I.

† The name Wallenstein is written in Kepler's secret code on the original draft of the horoscope, which is still extant.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pand the horoscope—which Wallenstein had profusely annotated on the margin—this time without the pretence of anonymity. Kepler had again obliged, but had saved his face with the usual warnings against the abuses of astrology. This second horoscope, which dates from 1624, stops at 1634 with the prophecy that March will bring "dreadful disorders over the land": Wallenstein was murdered on February 25th of that year.

Thus the ground was prepared for their meeting amidst the celebrations at Prague. The meeting ended, after lengthy negotiations, with Kepler's appointment as Wallenstein's private mathematicus in his newly acquired Duchy of Sagan. The Emperor had no objection, and Kepler was allowed to retain his title as Imperial Mathematician for what it was worth—in terms of hard cash certainly not much; for the Crown's debts to Kepler in arrears of salary and gratuities by now amounted to 11,817 florins. The Emperor politely informed Wallenstein that he expected the latter to pay this sum—which Wallenstein, of course, never did.

The deal with Wallenstein concluded, both men left Prague in May 1628: Wallenstein to lay unsuccessful siege to Strahlsund, which was the beginning of his downfall; Kepler to Sagan.

Compared to Sagan, Linz had been paradise:

> I am a guest and a stranger here, almost completely unknown, and I hardly understand the dialect of the locals, who in turn consider me a barbarian. . . .
>
> I feel confined by loneliness, far away from the great cities of the Empire; where letters come and go slowly, and at heavy expense. Add to this the agitations of the [counter-] reformation which, though I am not personally hit, did not leave me untouched. Sad examples are before me, or before my mind's eye, of acquaintances, friends, people of my immediate neighbourhood being ruined, and conversation with the terror-stricken is cut off by fear. . . .
>
> A little prophetess of eleven in Kottbuss, which is between here and Frankfort-on-the-Oder, threatens with the end of the world. Her age, her childish ignorance, and her enormous audiences make people believe in her.

There was, of course, no printing press in Sagan, so he set out again on travels to procure type, machinery, and printers.

> Amidst the collapse of towns, provinces, and countries, of old and new generations, in the fear of barbaric raids, of the violent destruction of hearth and home, I see myself obliged, a disciple of Mars though not a youthful one, to hire printers without betraying my fear. With the help of God I shall indeed bring this work to an end, in a soldierly fashion, giving my orders with bold defiance and leaving the worry about my funeral to the morrow.

Journey to the Moon

WHEN the new press was installed, in December 1629, in Kepler's own lodgings, he began the printing of an old, favourite brain-child of his: *Somnium*—a dream of a journey to the moon. He had written it some twenty years before, and from time to time had added notes to it, until these had far outgrown the original text.

The *Somnium* remained a fragment; Kepler died before he finished it, and it was only published posthumously, in 1634. It is the first work of science-fiction in the modern sense—as opposed to the conventional type of fantasy-utopias from Lucian to Campanella. Its influence on later authors of interplanetary journeys was considerable—from John Wilkins' *Discovery of a New World* and Henry More right down to Samuel Butler, Jules Verne, and H. G. Wells.

Somnium starts with a prelude full of autobiographical allusions. The boy Duracotus lived with his mother Fiolxhilda in Iceland "which the ancients called Thule."* The father had been a fisherman, who had died at the age of one hundred and fifty when the boy was only three. Fiolxhilda sold herbs in little bags of ram-skin to the seamen and conversed with demons. At fourteen, the boy curiously opened one of the little bags, whereupon his mother, in a fit of temper, sold him to a seafaring captain. The captain left him on the Isle of Hveen, where for the next five years Duracotus studied the science of astronomy under Tycho de Brahe. When he returned home, his repentant mother, as a treat, conjured up one of the friendly demons from Lavania†—the moon—in whose company selected mortals might travel to that planet. "After completing certain ceremonies, my mother, commanding silence with her outstretched hand, sat down beside me. No sooner had we, as arranged, covered our heads with a cloth, when a hoarse, supernatural voice began to whisper, in the Icelandic language, as follows. . . ."

Thus ends the prelude. The journey itself, the demon explains, is only possible during an eclipse of the moon, and must therefore be completed in four hours. The traveller is propelled by the spirits, but he is subject to the laws of physics; it is at this point that science takes over from fantasy:

> The initial shock [of acceleration] is the worst part of it, for he is thrown upward as if by an

* Kepler chose the name Duracotus because it sounded Scottish "and Scotland lies on the Islandic ocean"; "Fiolx" was the name for Iceland which he saw on an old map.

† From *Lavanah*—the Hebrew name of the moon. (Lavan = white.)

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

explosion of gunpowder.... Therefore he must be dazed by opiates* beforehand; his limbs must be carefully protected so that they are not torn from him and the recoil is spread over all parts of his body. Then he will meet new difficulties: *immense cold and inhibited respiration*.... When the first part of the journey is completed it becomes easier because on such a long journey the body no doubt escapes the magnetic force of the earth and enters that of the moon, so that the latter gets the upper hand. At this point we set the travellers free and leave them to their own devices: like spiders they will stretch out and contract, and propel themselves forward by their own force—for, as the magnetic forces of the earth and moon both attract the body and hold it suspended, the effect is as if neither of them were attracting it—so that in the end its mass will by itself turn toward the moon.

In the *Astronomia Nova* Kepler had come so close to the concept of universal gravity, that one had to assume the existence of a psychological blockage which made him reject it. In the passage just quoted he not only takes it for granted, but, with truly astonishing insight, postulates the existence of "zones of zero gravity"—that nightmare of science fiction. Later on in the *Somnium* he took a further step in the same direction by assuming that there are spring tides on the moon, due to the joint attraction of sun and earth.

The journey completed, Kepler proceeds to describe conditions on the moon. A lunar day, from sunrise to sunset, lasts approximately a fortnight, and so does a moon-night—for the moon takes a month to turn once round its axis, the same time it takes to complete a revolution round the earth. As a result, it turns always the same face to the earth, which the moon-creatures call their "volva" (from *revolvere*, to turn). This face of the moon they call the Subvolvan half, the other is the Prevolvan half. Common to both halves is that their year consists of twelve days-and-nights, and the resulting dreadful contrasts of temperature—scorching days, frozen nights. Common to both are also the queer motions of the starry sky—the sun and planets scuttle incessantly back and forth, a result of the moon's gyrations round the volva. This "lunatic" astronomy—in the legitimate double-meaning of the word—which Kepler develops with his usual precision, is sheer delight; nobody before (nor since, as far as I know) had attempted such a thing. But when it comes to conditions on the moon itself, the picture becomes grim.

The Prevolvans are the worst off. Their long nights are not made tolerable by the presence of the huge volva, as on the other hemisphere, for the Prevolvans of course never see the earth. Their nights are "bristling with ice and snow under the raging, icy winds." The day that follows is no better: for a fortnight the sun never leaves the sky, heating the air to a temperature "fifteen times hotter than our Africa."

The Subvolvans are a little better off because the huge volva softens their nights by reflecting some of the light and heat of the sun. The volva's surface is fifteen times that of our moon, and it stays always in the same place on the sky "as if nailed on," but growing and waning from full-volva to new volva, as our moon. At full-volva, Africa appears as a human head severed at its shoulders; Europe, a girl in a long robe bends down to kiss it while her long arm, stretched backwards, lures a jumping cat towards her.†

The mountains of Lavania are much higher than those on earth; so are the planets and the creatures that inhabit it. "Growth is rapid; everything is short-lived because it develops to such an enormous bodily mass.... Growth and decay take place on a single day."

The creatures are mostly like gigantic serpents. "The Prevolvans have no fixed and safe habitations; they traverse in hordes, in a single day, the whole of their world, following the receding waters either on legs that are longer than those of our camels, or on wings, or in ships." Some are divers, and breathe very slowly, so that they can take refuge from the scorching sun at the bottom of the deep waters. "Those that remain on the surface are boiled by the mid-day sun and serve as nourishment for the approaching nomadic hordes.... Others who cannot live without breathing, retreat into caves which are supplied with water by narrow canals so that the water may gradually cool on its long way and they may drink it; but when the night approaches, they go out for prey." Their skin is spongy and porous; but when a creature is taken unawares by the heat of the day, the skin becomes hard and scorched, and falls off in the evening. And yet they have a strange love for basking in the sun at noon—but only close to their crevices, to be able to make a swift and safe retreat....

In a short appendix, the Subvolvans are allowed cities surrounded by circular walls—the craters of the moon; but Kepler is only interested in the engineering problems of their construction. The book ends with Duracotus being woken by a cloudburst from his dream—or rather, from his nightmare of prehistoric giant

* It has recently been suggested that space-travellers should be anæsthetised during the initial acceleration.

† The back of the head is the Sudan, its chin Algeria; the girl's head is Spain, her open mouth at Malaga, her chin at Murcia; her arms are Italy and the British Isles, the latter luring the Scandinavian cat.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reptiles, of which Kepler had, of course, no knowledge whatsoever. No wonder that Henry More was inspired by the *Somnium* to a poem called *Insomnium Philosophicum*. But more amusing is Samuel Butler's paraphrase on Kepler in "The Elephant in the Moon":

> Quoth he—Th' Inhabitants of the Moon,
> Who when the Sun shines hot at Noon,
> Do live in Cellars underground
> Of eight Miles deep and eighty around
> (In which at once they fortify
> Against the Sun and th' Enemy)
> Because their People's civiler
> Than those rude Peasants, that are found
> To live upon the upper Ground,
> Call'd Privolvans, with whom they are
> Perpetually at open War.

Although most of the *Somnium* was written much earlier, one readily understands why it was the last book on which he worked, and which he wished to see in print. All the dragons which had beset his life—from the witch Fiolxhilda and her vanished husband, down to the poor reptilian creatures in perpetual flight, shedding their diseased skin, and yet so anxious to bask under an inhuman sun—they are all there, projected into a cosmic scenery of scientific precision and rare, original beauty. All Kepler's work, and all his discoveries, were acts of catharsis; it was only fitting that the last one should end with a fantastic flourish.

The End

WALLENSTEIN could not care less what Kepler did. The arrangement had been a mutual disappointment from the beginning.

After three months, the pressure of Wallenstein's rivals induced the Emperor to dismiss his Generalissimo. It was only a temporary setback in Wallenstein's dramatic career, but Kepler believed that it was the end. Once again, and now for the last time, he took to the roads.

In October, he departed from Sagan. He left his family behind, but took with him cartloads of books and documents, which were dispatched ahead to Leipzig. His son-in-law wrote later on: "Kepler left Sagan unexpectedly, and his condition was such that his widow, his children, and friends expected to see the Last Judgment sooner than his return."

When he set out on that last journey across half of war-torn Europe, he took all the cash he had with him, leaving Susanna and the children penniless. Even so he had to borrow fifty florins from a merchant in Leipzig, where he stopped on the first lap of his journey.

He seems to have had one of his curious premonitions. All his life he had been in the habit of casting horoscopes for his birthdays. The horoscopes for the years preceding and following his sixtieth show merely the position of the planets, without comment. The sixtieth, his last, is an exception; he noted on it that the position of the planets were almost the same as at his birth.

From Leipzig he rode on, on a miserable old horse to Nuremberg, where he visited a printer. Then on to Ratisbon, where the Diet was sitting, in full pomp, presided over by the Emperor who owed him twelve thousand florins.

He arrived in Ratisbon on November 2nd. Three days later he took to bed with a fever. An eye-witness reported that "he did not talk, but pointed his index finger now at his head, now at the sky above him." Another witness, the Lutheran preacher, Jacob Fischer, wrote in a letter to a friend:

> During the recent session of the Diet, our Kepler arrived in this town on an old jade (which he subsequently sold for two florins). He was only three days here when he was taken ill with a feverish ailment. At first he thought that he was suffering from *sacer ignis*, or fever pustules, and paid no attention to it. When his feverish condition worsened, they bled him, without any result. Soon his mind became clouded with ever-rising fever. He did not talk like one in possession of his faculties. Several preachers visited him and comforted him with the living waters of their sympathy. In his last agony, as he gave up his ghost to God, a Protestant clergyman of Ratisbon, Sigismund Christopher Donavarus, a relative of mine, consoled him in a manly way, as behoves a servant of God. This happened on November 15th, 1630. On the 19th he was buried in the cemetery of St. Peter, outside the town.

The cemetery was destroyed during the Thirty Years' War, and Kepler's bones were scattered; but the epitaph which he wrote for himself is preserved:

> *Mensus eram coelos, nunc terrae metior umbras*
> *Mens coelistis erat, corporis umbra iacet.*
>
> I measured the skies, now the shadows I measure
> Skybound was the mind, earthbound the body rests.

There is also a paragraph in one of his late letters which lingers on in memory:

> Sagan in Silesia, in my own printing press, November 6th, 1629:
>
> When the storm rages and the state is threatened by shipwreck, we can do nothing more noble than to lower the anchor of our peaceful studies into the ground of eternity.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

J. M. Cohen

Since the Civil War

New Currents in Spanish Poetry

THE OUTBREAK of the Civil War and the murder of García Lorca in its opening days put an end to a major period in Spanish poetry which had begun with the century. The war itself produced only one important book of poems, on the Republican side, *Viento del pueblo* by Miguel Hernández; and at its conclusion almost every poet of importance was silent or in exile. A seven-year period, corresponding roughly to the duration of our own war, set in, during which little was published. Printing-presses had been destroyed, paper was in short supply, the censorship was forbiddingly strict, and of those few writers who might have broken the silence, several lived under a ban imposed on them for their liberal sympathies. No periodical was allowed to print them; no critic or reviewer might so much as mention them by name.

Towards 1942 the government itself made an attempt to revive literature by founding periodicals to replace those which had perished in the war. They even set up a national publishing house, the *Editora nacional*, and appointed a minister as *Vice Secretario de Educación popular* to take charge of cultural activities. The result was not encouraging. Although the authorities demanded no more of writers than that they should divorce literature from politics, not many wished to associate themselves with these sponsored publications. The few poets who collaborated, more or less unenthusiastically, in this official endeavour to set Spanish writing on its feet were traditionalists of the second rank whose work had hardly been noticed before the war. With great technical proficiency, they elaborated the commonplaces of love, religion, and natural description, addressing themselves to a public considerably smaller than that which had been reached by the men of the thirties, Jorge Guillén, Pedro Salinas, Rafael Alberti, and García Lorca. While the poetry of Leopoldo Panero and Luis Rosales—to name the two outstanding writers of this "lost" generation—is often pleasing, it clearly comes at the end of a movement; there is no promise in it of anything new. By 1947 most of these sponsored publications were dead, and the *Editora nacional* was in difficulties. Spanish literature, however, began to revive almost at that moment, under the auspices of those few outstanding men who survived from the Republican era, and had been content to encourage new writers throughout the years when they could themselves hardly publish anything in their own country. The new Spanish poetry, in fact, which began to appear in 1948, owes everything to the stimulus of those older poets who remained in Spain, Vicente Aleixandre, Gerardo Diego, and Dámaso Alonso.

One potent influence on the new generation, however, did not survive to read the work of these younger men. Miguel Hernández, a man of the "lost" generation, whose work had wonderfully matured under the stress of war, had been imprisoned by the

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dictatorship at the end of hostilities, and had been allowed to die of tuberculosis, still in gaol, in 1942. A few of his magnificent prison poems began to appear in periodicals in 1946, and a selection from his entire work, with almost all the war-poems excluded by the censorship, was published in 1952. Despite the difficulty of obtaining his books, Hernández' influence on the younger men was very great. For he, almost alone of the pre-war poets, had not been content to write for a small cultured public; and in this desire to address "the great majority" he has been followed by all the important new poets of the last decade.

THOUGH Miguel Hernández had made an impression before the outbreak of the civil war, it is rather for his technical mastery than for his poetic statements that one can still read his earlier poems. The son of simple farming people, from Orihuela in the province of Alicante, he had found his first books on the shelves of a working-men's club. After reading his way through the Spanish classics, he had, in the year of Góngora's tercentenary, written a long poem in the neo-Gongoristic style that had suddenly come into fashion; and this had won him the friendship and encouragement of the best poets in Madrid. Coming to the capital, he followed this triumph with two more books, chiefly of sonnets, which further displayed his remarkable facility without suggesting any assured theme. Vigour and a mastery of form were at this peasant lad's command from the first, but behind them, as personal statement, was only a sense of impending disaster, which often lent gravity to poems otherwise too full of modish tricks. The repeated image of the bull that enters the ring with the foreknowledge that he will die is already prophetic of the poet Hernández was to become under stress of war, hopeless imprisonment, and impending death.

Before 1931 Miguel Hernández had already gone out for a wider public by writing two plays in the manner of Lope for the new popular theatre, in which Lorca was also collaborating. When the generals' rebellion broke out, he alone of the poets who contributed to the ballad-books that were sent out into the trenches wrote war poems that were direct, fervent, and bellicose, without being false or jingoistic. In defence of the Republic he was now at one with the audience he had always wanted to address. Moreover he had, with the help of Vicente Aleixandre, a poet ten years his senior, and the Chilean Pablo Neruda, evolved a style as finished and as disciplined as his previous writing had been loose and over-decorated. He was now able to voice the hopes of Madrid's defenders in language that they could understand, without however sacrificing the sharpness of his own vision.

Se despedaza el agua en los zarzales:
las lágrimas no arrasan,
no duelen las epinas ni las flechas.
Y se grita ¡Salud! a todos los que pasan
con la boca anegada de cosechas.

Tiene el mundo otra cara. Se acerca lo
remoto
en una muchedumbre de bocas y de brazos.
Se ve la muerte como un mueblo roto,
como una blanca silla hecha pedazos.

Salí del llanto, me encontré en España,
en una plaza de hombres de fuego imperativo.
Supe que la tristeza corrompe, enturbia,
daña....
*Me alegré seriamente lo mismo que el olivo.**

Hernández was still using the surprising imagery of ultraism (the Spanish counterpart of futurism), though more sparingly than before. But now reality had overtaken literature. The equivalence of death and broken furniture was not a poetic conceit but an everyday sight. As in the case of the surrealist Paul Eluard, caught up in the Resistance ten years later, what in peacetime had been a

* The water breaks up in the bramble-patches; tears do not brim the eyes, thorns and arrows do not hurt. And one cries "Comrade" to all passers, with one's mouth crammed with harvests.
The world has a different face. The far-away draws close in a crowd of mouths and arms. Death looks like a piece of broken furniture, like a white chair hacked to pieces.
I emerged from tears, and found myself in Spain, in a square with men of commanding fire. I knew that sadness corrupts, confuses, harms... I became gravely joyful, like an olive-tree.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

poet's private nightmare had now come to infect the waking world. After the war, in the three years of his imprisonment, shut away from his beloved wife, and from their son whom he had never seen, Hernández wrote with a stoicism that had been absent from those earlier poems in which he had half-glimpsed his end. Having mastered all the traditional styles during his fêted apprenticeship, he now wrote in his solitude with a simplicity that in some poems recalls that of the old song-books, in others strikes images as telling as those of the ultraists yet founded on an experience which was no longer literary. The last, prison years of his life yielded a group of compassionate poems that look back on the purposeless cruelties of the war, a *Cancionero y Romancero de Ausencias* that dwells on his absence from his wife and son, and a handful of final poems that recapture all his old vigour and some of his old complexity. For him this time was not one of bitterness or of self-pity, but principally of this absence of all that he loved, and of all expectation of a future.

Ausencia en todo veo:
tus ojos la reflejan.

Ausencia en todo escucho:
tu voz a tiempo suena.

Ausencia en todo aspiro:
tu aliento huele a hierba.

Ausencia en todo toco:
tu cuerpo se despuebla.

Ausencia en todo siento.
*Ausencia. Ausencia. Ausencia.**

A few of his sixty-three poems of absence are no more than fragments. Others are hideous with the news of the moment—that his child has nothing to eat but bread and onions. But the last poems of all, more sustained, graver, and more daring in their imagery than the *Cancionero*, develop once more the theme of the bull predestined to slaughter, speaking now of his mortal wound not as something foreshadowed in the future but as the mouth through which his life's blood is pouring away.

Yet such is Hernández' fundamental vigour that his final note is one of hope, based it would seem on no religious belief. He had lived so fully, so generously, so violently perhaps, that he could not think of death as the end:

Turbia es la lucha sin sed de mañana.
¡Qué lejanía de opacos latidos!
Soy un cárcel con una ventana
ante una gran soledad de rugidos.

Soy una abierta ventana que escucha,
por donde va tenebrosa la vida.
Pero hay un rayo de sol en la lucha
*que siempre deja la sombra vencida.**

Hernández' hope, his valour, his simplicity, his feeling for common experiences, for common things, and for people in the mass—the "immense majority"—inform the whole of the poetry that has followed him. Though dead six years, it was he, and not the major living influences—Alberti, Neruda, and Luis Cernuda—not even the active godfather of the new poets, Vicente Aleixandre, that led the poetic revival of 1948.

THIS event had been prepared for by the collapse of the official literature; by the foundation of new periodicals, first the short-lived *Espadaña*, which was devoted only to poetry, and then in 1946 *Insula*, which has survived till now, despite its temporary suppression two years ago, and which keeps the Spanish reader in touch with literature at home and abroad; and by the influence of two books of poetry published by survivors of the older generation: *Sombra del paraíso* by Vicente Aleixandre and *Hijos de ira* by Dámaso Alonso, both of which had appeared in 1944.

These two poets, then in their early forties, had in the past been overshadowed

* I see absence in everything; your eyes reflect it. I hear absence in everything; your voice has the sound of time. I breathe absence from everything; your breath smells of grass. I touch absence in everything; your body becomes empty. I feel absence in everything. Absence. Absence. Absence.

* The struggle is clouded, with no longing for a tomorrow. How far the prospect of dull throbbing extends! I am a cell with one window, that looks on a great and roaring solitude. I am an open and listening window through which life is darkly departing. But there is a ray of sun in the struggle that always conquers darkness in the end.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

by Salinas and Guillén, García Lorca and Alberti. Alonso in fact was not primarily a poet, but an analytical critic of great powers who had, almost single-handed, reinterpreted the later and more complex Góngora to a public that had hitherto rejected him as obscure. Now, in the intellectual vacuum of 1944, he adumbrated a theme which was to run through all the poetry of his successors: that of the difficult search for God in a religious situation that made unquestioning faith almost impossible. Aleixandre had now drawn nearer to a religious standpoint also, by admitting human values that he had once underestimated. His earlier poetry had harshly insisted that man's life and his love were the product of forces working through him for purposes which were not his. Now, in *Sombra del Paraíso*, he ceased to identify man solely with nature, and came to think of him more tenderly as an exile on earth, who had fallen, not from heaven—for Aleixandre is not a Christian poet—but from some purer state. In poetry of great musical subtlety and more sparing imagery, he wrote of his own departure from the paradise of childhood, and mourned for the beauty of a love that would not survive the grave. But Aleixandre's was a brave and solemn mourning. Celebrating the glory of life even as he accepted its inevitable passing, in a poem addressed to Man he asked:

¿Por qué protestas, hijo de la luz,
humano que transitorio en la tierra,
redimes por un instante tu materia sin vida?
¿De donde vienes, mortal que del barro has llegado
*para un momento brillar y regresar después a tu apagada patria?**

and the answer comes joyfully:

He aquí la inmensa madre que de ti no es distinta.
Y barro tú en el barro, totalmente perdura.†

* Why do you protest, son of light, you a man that, as you pass across the earth, momentarily redeem the lifeless matter of which you are made? Whence are you, mortal, that has come from clay, to shine for a moment and then return to your extinguished country?

† Here is the mighty mother who is indistinguishable from you, and when you are clay in the clay, survives in her entirety.

The poetry which began to be written in 1948 is similarly positive and buoyant. It is, however, in great part, as Aleixandre's and Alonso's is not, a social poetry; it is also a religious poetry, and it is a poetry that is often concerned with natural objects and with the smaller intimacies of human relationship. All these three strands are frequently united in a single poem; and all three preoccupations are in varying degrees present in the thought of the dozen or so poets whose work has achieved maturity since 1948. There is, at the same time, absent from this poetry as a whole all consciousness of Europe and the modern manner, as it springs from Baudelaire and Mallarmé, and all relationship with the poetry of Spanish-America, which is now evolving on entirely different lines. Between the impact of Rubén Darío and García Lorca's visit to New York, Spain had accepted and adapted to its needs a number of influences beginning with Parnassianism and ending with Surrealism. Contemporary Spanish poets have rejected all this, as they have rejected also their own neo-Baroque mannerism of the pre-war years. They have returned to a purely Spanish tradition, and have come to admire most among their recent poets those who were most impervious to influences from across the Pyrenees. Antonio Machado and Unamuno have come to count for much more than Jiménez, Guillén, Cernuda, and Alberti, who, because of their long absence, seem to represent a style that is not tough enough for the situation in which the Spanish poet of to-day writes. The impressionism of Andalusia is at present yielding to the harsher outlines of the north; and so far is contemporary Spain from the international sympathies of the Republican era that even Pablo Neruda, a poet whose social preoccupations are very similar to their own, is ceasing to exert as much influence as he did even eight years ago.

Then Gabriel Celaya (b. 1911), a poet from the Basque north and an engineer by profession, who began writing before the civil war, addressed the great Chilean in a poem surprising for its courage and its social indignation. By remaining committed to no

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

party—their sentiments being as acceptable to a root-and-branch Falangist as to a secret socialist or anarchist—the new poets have succeeded in voicing uncensored opinions that would not have been tolerated in a novelist. Several novels indeed have been suppressed for saying far less than Celaya does in his address to Neruda:

Cantemos la promesa,
quizás tan sólo un niño,
unos ojos que miran hacia el mundo asombrados
mas no interrogan; claros, sin reservas admiran.
¡Por ellos combatimos y a veces somos duros!
¡Bastaría que un niño cualquiera así aprobara para justificarnos!

Te escribo desde un puerto,
desde una costa rota,
desde un país sin dientes, ni párpados, ni llanto.
Te escribo con sus muertos, te escribo por los vivos,
por todos los que aguantan y aun luchan duramente.
Poca alegría queda ya en esta España nuestra.
*Mas ya ves, esperamos.**

Celaya's combative pessimism in regard to the present is balanced by his great hope for the future. "Our elders," he said in his answer to a questionnaire, "wrote for the great minority. . . ." Today, he believes with Hernández, the poet must go out to find a new audience. "He must turn his back on the half-educated petit-bourgeoisie, and seek contact with certain neglected social strata that urgently invoke our conscience to call them to life." Another of his outstanding poems is addressed to one Andrés Basterra, a worker in Celaya's own factory. It is written in praise of human sympathy and of the dignity of manual work; of silence between men, and of the feel and quality of the materials they handle:

Pino rojo de Suecia y Haya brave de Hungría,
Samanguilas y Okolas venidas de Guinea,
*Robles de Slavonia. . . .**

THE weakness of Celaya's poetry is on the formal side; and the same is true of Blas de Otero, a younger man who comes from the North also—he was born in Bilbao in 1916. But with him social interests are bound up with religious, and the prevailing influence is not Neruda's but that of the tough and questioning Miguel de Unamuno. Like Unamuno, Otero finds it impossible to fit his thoughts exactly to his lines. His aim is to speak to the "great majority", but, unlike Celaya, he is at the same time conscious of man's isolation in his relationship with God. Like Unamuno, he wrestles with his Maker for a faith that never comes easily to him, and when he thinks of his audience it is of a multitude of individuals engaged in the same secret struggle.

Es a la inmensa mayoría, fronda
de turbias frentes y sufrientes pechos,
a los que luchan contra Dios, deshechos
de un solo golpe en su tiniebla honda.

A ti, y a ti, y a ti, tapia redonda
de un sol con sed, famélicos barbechos,
a todos, oh sí, a todos van derechos,
estos poemas hechos carne y ronda.†

A poem which has begun in simplicity has, in its second verse, become extremely complicated. The image of a town-wall, thirsty and sun-baked, which stands for an audience eager for poetry, leads rather obscurely to a comparison of the poem to flesh—and flesh does not quench thirst—and to a serenade which brings the whole population of the town into the orbit of the poem. The

* Let us sing of promise; perhaps one child only, two astonished eyes that look on the world, but ask no questions; two clear eyes that admire without reserves. For them we fight and are sometimes hard. If only one child were to approve of us thus, we should be justified.

I write to you from a port, from a broken coast, from a country without teeth or eyelids or tears. I write to you with its dead, I write to you for the living, for all those who endure and go on fighting hard. Little joy remains in this Spain of ours. But you see, we hope.

* Red pine from Sweden, and stout beech from Hungary, African cedar and okola that come from (Spanish) Guinea, oak from Slavonia . . .

† It is to the great majority, leafage of troubled brows and suffering breasts, to those who struggle with God, and are destroyed at a single blow in His deep darkness. To you, and to you, and to you, round wall like a thirsty sun, hungry fallow-lands, to all, oh yes, to all, these poems go straight, that have become flesh and serenade.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

expected phrase would be *carne y hueso*, flesh and bone; but the rhyme prevents its use, and Otero seems to fumble with his substitute.

One may think, indeed, that though Blas de Otero is a very gifted writer, he is not always happy as a poet. However, in his moments of greatest directness, as in the final sonnet of his book *Redoble de Conciencia*, he magnificently succeeds in making a simple statement with feeling and with freshness:

Porque vivir se ha puesto al rojo vivo,
(Siempre la sangre, oh Dios, fué colorada.).

Digo vivir, vivir como si nada
hubiese de quedar de lo que escribo.

Porque escribir es viento fugitivo,
y publicar, columna arrinconada.

Digo vivir, vivir a pulso, airada-
*mente morir, citar desde el estribo....**

While many of Otero's poems call broadly for peace and the freedom to speak, for a reconciliation between man and man, and between man and God, others are preoccupied with a subject that pervades much contemporary Spanish poetry: the question of Spain itself and of the country's isolation. The civil war and the Franco government have so intensified the writer's consciousness of Spain's peculiar, bloody, and retarded destiny, that it has now become a major theme of poetry. Otero uses the compound term *españahogándose* (drowning oneself in Spain) to describe this state of preoccupation, in mingled love and horror, with a land which has been nourished with so much of the blood of its own sons.

The theme of Spain is present in the neo-Romantic and somewhat extravagant poetry of Victoriano Crémer (b. 1910), another Northerner of a slightly older generation. His emphatic style or *tremendismo* gave the name to a movement, which almost took shape at the beginning of the revival, but which has on the whole given place to a more restrained manner in the last years. *Tremendismo* sought to develop the rhetorical fervours of the Romantics, or of Hernández at his weakest. The style is symptomatic chiefly as a reaction against the neatnesses of the neo-Gongorists and the "lost" generation. Its strongest practitioner, Eugenio de Nora (b. 1924), has effectively disowned it by stating that his aim is to be concise, and that a poem should not be allowed to dazzle its reader. He shares with Crémer, however, a concern with his country's destiny, and one of his chief collections is entitled *España, pasión de mi vida.* Nora's predominant emotion appears to be one of despair at the present situation, relieved by a buoyant and pulsing hope, like that of Otero, for the future; and this, despite his reluctance to shine, still gives a fervour to his lines:

Con los muertos gloriosos estaremos un día
fermentando la tierra y bebiendo la nieve;
con los vivos ahora, con el sueño en los manos
que luchan, con los fuertes y fieramente
alegres.

¡La salud de los flores, el vigor de los árboles,
la ira dulce del mar y el rumor de los fuentes,
están con los que avanzan, combatiendo y
cantando,
como nosotros todos: hasta que Dios des-
*pierte!**

There is in all this social poetry, whether classical or romantic in intention, a fundamental weakness of form. Nora says of Hernández, that his was an uncontrolled vigour which was quenched before it could reach maturity. There is, so far, no sign of maturity in his own work, which is still in the stage of receiving influences. Another line of poets, on the other hand, contrasted with these only by a difference of accent—for them the religious and the personal preoccupation come before the social, which is how-

* Because living has struck the red quick (blood, oh God, was always red). I say live, live as if nothing were to remain of what I write. Because writing is a fleeting wind, and publishing a column thrust into a corner. I say live, live violently, die proudly, make your challenge standing in the stirrups.

* One day we shall be with the glorious dead, fermenting the earth and drinking the snows; now we are with the living, with the dream that is in struggling hands, with the strong and the proudly gay.
The health of flowers, the strength of trees, the sweet anger of the sea, and the sound of springs, are with those who advance, fighting and singing, as we all do—until God awakes!

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ever not absent—have been more disciplined craftsmen from the start. The first of these, who made his mark as long ago as 1943, was Rafael Morales (b. 1919), whose *Poemas del Toro* developed the theme of the bull fated to die, which had been used by Hernández, and by Rafael Alberti before him. His style was at this point slightly facile. It is in his later poems, tender celebrations of the things of every day, of the poor, the forgotten, and the neglected, that Morales has found his true subject. He is a minor poet of restraint and compassion, who seeks to imprison in a small span and in classical language a vision of God as present in humble things. When he writes on patently religious themes he is generally trite. But when he is content to chronicle the simple sights of his own district, its old rag-men, its blind pedlars, and its waste-collectors, he transforms it into a suburb of heaven.

THE short-lived poet and painter, José Luis Hidalgo (1919–47), who also made his mark only with his final volume *Los Muertos*, had but one theme and that a major one; as a dying man, he wrestled with death, arguing, questioning, and almost hectoring a God who seemed often to be absent and always uncommunicative:

Dime, dime, Señor, ¿por qué a nosotros
nos elegiste para tu batalla?
Y después, con la muerte, ¿qué ganamos,
*la eterna paz o la eterna borrasca?**

The same questionings, not in relation to death so much as to God's absence from the midst of life, have given richness to *Noche del sentido*, the last book by Carlos Bousoño (b. 1923), a distinguished critic whose poetry had hitherto been one of simple and rather decorative acceptance. Of all contemporary Spanish poets he has the greatest variety of technical accomplishments, the widest store of digested reading among foreign authors. He cites Shelley, Keats, and Leopardi as among his favourite poets. But whereas the *tremendistas* remain predominantly Romantic and the more religious poets are still affected by the Baroque—and through translations with the more personal divine poetry of G. M. Hopkins—Bousoño has effectively brought the two styles together. His poetry both reasons and sings; it can be both wiry and tender, as it is in his metaphysical love-poem "Tu y yo":

Tu y yo, los dos, bajo la luz del día.
Bajo la luz que dura en lo inocente,
oh, sí, los dos, bajo la luz riente
queremos ser. Queremos . . . Yo querría.

Contra la sombra o la melancolía,
contra las injusticias del presente,
quién te tuviera siempre, siempre. ¡Tente,
amor pequeño, campo de alegría!

Y el tiempo, ya empujándonos a un irnos
Aquí los dos hablando. Sin oírnos.
Buscándonos a tientas. Sin tenernos.

Y el tiempo, ya empujándonos a un irnos
inacabable. No podemos sernos
*jamás. ¡Entrando siempre en el morirnos!**

Beside Bousoño stands another poet of wide reading in many languages, who is equally at home in the sonnet and in looser verse forms, Vicente Gaos (b. 1919).

Gaos is the subtlest of contemporary Spanish poets, since his aim is to reconcile the opposites of violence and reflectiveness, represented among his fellow-poets by Nora and Morales. Like the latter, his ideas are classical; in a lecture given in 1955, and recently printed, he stresses the fact that poet and critic must live under the same skin; that if the first impulse towards a poem proceeds from inspiration, the actual process of creation is a compromise. The writer is in part dominated by this unreasoning force, in part compelled to dominate it. "Between the Eastern

* Tell me, tell me, Lord, why was it us you chose for your battle? And afterwards, what do we gain at death, eternal peace or eternal storms?

* You and I, two, beneath the light of day. Beneath the light that lasts in innocence. Oh yes, we two, beneath the laughing light, want to be. We want . . . I could wish . . .

Against shadows or melancholy, against the injustices of today, if only one could hold you for ever for ever. Stay, little love, field of delight!

And here we two, looking at one another without seeing. Here we two, speaking without hearing one another. Groping towards one another without taking hold.

And time, already impelling us towards an unending departure. We can never be ourselves, for we are always entering into death.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

shore and the Western shore," he states, when writing of death, "there is no gorge, no impassable abyss, only a rippling river of calm water." A poem for him, therefore, is like this river, a unifying object, the joint creation of emotion and intellect, or critical power. His writing is as skilfully contrived as a Gongorist's, while at the same time as simple in its statement of faith or passing doubt, of contrast or reconciliation, as that of Hidalgo or Bousoño. Gaos moves with assurance from the field of natural observation to that of metaphysical conclusions. In his vision of nature he is a little akin to Jorgé Guillén, yet for the older poet's shimmer he substitutes a clarity of outline more likely to be understood by the postulated "great majority." No contemporary, except perhaps Hidalgo, is as capable of striking such an unforgettable line as:

*No, Dios no me ha dejado aún de su mano.**

or of coining a complete sonnet so inevitable and yet so finely worked as "Incompleta belleza" from his last book *Profecía de Recuerdo*

Si a veces nos asalta la evidencia
de Dios, tras una nube, en una rosa,
en unos ojos de honda y misteriosa
mirada.... Si, de pronto, en rauda ciencia,

rozamos cierto a Dios en la inocencia
de un río, en su corriente rumorosa...
Si a veces Dios a mano está en la cosa
más fugitiva y leve, y su presencia

da belleza divina a un agua triste,
a un resplandor final en el poniente,
a un vago viento que en la tarde insiste...

Si a veces tan cercano a Dios se siente.
Si a veces—rosa, río, luz—existe
tan ciegamente Dios. Si el mundo miente.†

* No, I am not yet forsaken by God's hand.

† If sometimes the evidence for God springs on us through a cloud, in a rose, in eyes that have a deep and mysterious gaze.... If suddenly, in a flash of knowledge, we touch God for certain in the innocence of a river, in its noisy current... If sometimes God is at hand in something even more fugitive and light, and His presence gives divine beauty to a melancholy pool, to a final glow in the west, to a slight breeze that persists at evening. If at times one feels so close to God. If at times—as rose, river, or light—God so blindly exists... If the world lies.

Certainty of another sort persists throughout the poems of José Hierro. His poetry is deliberately understressed.

Tú, que hueles la flor de la bella palabra,
acaso no comprendas las mías sin aroma.
Tú que buscas el agua que corre transparente
*no has de beber mis aguas rojas.**

Such is his address to aesthetes in his poem "Para un esteta"; Hierro is an outspoken enemy of the ivory tower; a social poet, though very different from Celaya and Otero, in that his poems, if addressed to the "great majority," are couched rather for private reading than for public recitation. Hierro's poetry has an individual intimacy. He speaks from his own life, of his four years of imprisonment as a boy after the civil war, of his deeply-felt private relationships, but always in the capacity of a man like many others:

Yo, José Hierro, un hombre
como hay muchos...

a man who on some evening lies on his bed and dreams—of words. Hierro is very conscious of himself as a craftsman, yet he has said of his poetry that if it is read in a hundred years it will be for its documentary value alone. It will, however, certainly be valued in future for its absolute honesty, for its refusal to use big words in which to express his consciousness of isolation, and his knowledge that only the minor intimacies of life can preserve a man's honour in a society that is at present as dishonourable, restrictive, and poverty-stricken as that of contemporary Spain. Hierro is, as he says, a poet of his time, but in proclaiming the paramount importance of the private life he is also very much more.

Several other poets might be mentioned, chief among them José Maria Valverde (b. 1926), a religious writer of an orthodox stamp who made an early reputation, which he has not, on the whole, sustained. His piety, though sensitive and gentle, is much less in keeping with the time than the writing of two poets even younger than he, each

* You who smell the flowers of fine speech may not understand my own, which have no perfume. You who seek waters that flow clear must not drink of my red waters.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of whom has made an impression and won a prize with a single book: José Angel Valente (b. 1929), who was recently lector in Spanish at Oxford, and Claudio Rodríguez (b. 1934), whose *Don de la Ebriadad*, written when he was only nineteen, reveals an amazing mastery of the reflective line together with a mature power of organising passages of some length. Valente is an intimist, in descent from Hierro, but Rodríguez introduces new themes and measures into Spanish poetry; in his evocation of remembered things, and his analysis of mood and illumination, he recalls Wordsworth in passages of *The Prelude*. Rodríguez may well prove to be a very important poet. He is at present a lecturer at Nottingham University.

THE span from *Viento del Pueblo*, written by Hernández at the height of the civil war to Rodríguez' *Don de la ebriedad*, which won the Adonáis prize for 1953, and to Vicente Gaos' *Profecía del recuerdo*, published in 1957, is a bare twenty years, during which the political situation has eased in some ways, but has not altered. The novel and the play, remaining subject to heavy censorship, have made little progress. Cela's *Colmena*, a depressing panorama of Madrid in the years of the World War, written in the style of Dos Passos, was not allowed to appear in Spain; Juan Goytisolo's equally depressing picture of student life under the dictatorship slipped past the censor, thanks to its author's care in suggesting that the hopeless and violent characters he so brilliantly called to life were untypical; as in the extremes of their conduct they were. But the poetry reflects most faithfully the preoccupation of contemporary Spain with the question of freedom, which is not viewed from a party point of view but as a matter of principle; with the country's destiny, which is viewed on the whole tragically though with deep love; and with the questions of religious experience and religious doubt. These last are presented for the first time since the counter-Reformation, as facets of a direct relationship between God and the individual, on the intimacy of which the whole health of society depends. The new religious poetry is, in essence, therefore, Protestant, as that of Unamuno was in the past; the Church, its ceremonial, and its sacraments are not referred to. Its colour, in contrast to that of Mexico, for example, remains Christian, but it is no longer specifically Catholic. Protestantism, indeed, by its very unfamiliarity, is beginning to arouse great interest in contemporary Spain. To many the Catholic Church seems too deeply implicated in politics to command respect.

Spain is, however, cut off from European thought to an extent far greater than the more distant countries of Spanish speech in the New World. Several Spanish poets have lived abroad, as lectors in various universities, and most are at home in the poetry of several languages; the analytical criticism of Dámaso Alonso and Bousoño has, moreover, given them an introspective interest in the processes of creation which was lacking in the previous generation. The replies of each contributor to an editorial questionnaire, printed in the *Antología consultada*—an anthology chosen by poets and editors in consultation—of 1952, reveal the extent to which every leading poet is now aware of his purposes, and anxious to address a new audience.

IN this he has not so far succeeded. Few books of poetry are printed in quantities of more than a thousand. His audience is, in fact, more restricted than that of Lorca's generation, since the Spanish-American public visits its dislike of Spain's government on its writers, whom, in so far as they are not expatriates, it wrongly suspects of holding fascist sympathies. Little of Spain's new writing has circulated in Mexico or Buenos Aires. Another reason for the shrinkage of its audience is the official lack of interest, since the collapse of the officially sponsored journals, in the spread of culture. Such periodicals as *Insula*, a monthly which has recently suffered a year's suppression, attempt in about one-third of the space of this journal to keep the Spanish reader abreast of new publications, and to give him some poetry, a short story or two, and some more

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

extended criticisms. In this the journal is most successful within the limits set on it by its paper allotment, and by the inevitable censorship.

The new Spanish literature is coming to depend increasingly on its own resources, and to pay less attention to those exiles whose outspokenness once gave them a great and clandestine following. Forbidden books have always been obtainable by circuitous means, though they are never on display in the bookshops. But the new writers and their public have in the last years acquired an independence, which is the obverse side of their present isolation. Their models are to be found in the main stream of Spanish poetry from the *Cancioneros*—the old songbooks—and Manrique, by way of Lope to Antonio Machado, who died in the final retreat of the Republican armies into France. They have found, in contrast to most other countries, a simplicity of expression, a directness and freedom from rhetoric, that are new to modern Spain. New too are the speech rhythms in which poetry is now coming to be written. Both Classical and Romantic styles can be found in individual poets, but the predominant tendency is undoubtedly towards restraint. Gongorism, surrealism, ultraism, are fashions that have passed; even *tremendism* has now an old-fashioned look. A few years ago, Dámaso Alonso wrote in a poem that the modern poets were going together in the same train, but no one knew where it was going. Latterly the direction of the line has begun to be clear. The territory through which it runs has recently been admirably mapped by José Luis Cano in his *Antologia de la nueva poesia espanola* (Editorial Gredos, Madrid).

WHEN a political change comes to Spain, there may be as surprising a flowering of matured talents, and as apparently sudden an advance in many arts as took place in Italy on the break-up of fascism. From as much as one can see of it at present, it will be disciplined, individualistic, and, in the broad sense, protestant.*

Meanwhile, as I write, the censorship has made a sudden attack on the poets, selecting Blas de Otero as the first victim. From a collected volume of his early poems two pieces were struck out as it went to press. Then a reprint of a later book was forbidden, and his newest collection likewise prevented from appearing. None of his work of the last six years, in which its social content has become a little more pronounced than before, can be bought in Spain. It is, however, to be published in Buenos Aires, and at least two other poets have begun to send their work to Mexico. So far no action has been taken against writers who publish abroad. One can only hope that in a situation in which the imprisonment of intellectuals without trial—as in the case of the editors of the review *Aldebaran*, who have now been detained for a year—is once more becoming usual, their immunity will continue.

* An oblique reference to this concluding point, which was made to me last year by one of the poets here reviewed, was removed by the Spanish censorship from the account of an interview on literary subjects, which I gave to a representative of *Insula*.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NOTES & TOPICS

The Antiseptic City

THE Royal Institute of British Architects, whom God preserve, has a library. In it there is a subject index of recent buildings and projects called, with unconscious truth, the Grey Books. And in the Grey Books there are about one hundred and fifty entries under "town planning," showing redevelopment schemes all over the country by architects, engineers, and surveyors. They are nearly all devoted to city arrangement by use-zoning, site arrangement by blocks-in-landscape (all too often blocks-in-asphalt), and room arrangement by predictions of family-size and the needs of the statistically-average family in the statistically-average flat. In other words they have exactly the same kind of sterility that bedevilled the plans examined by William H. Whyte ["The Eviscerated City," ENCOUNTER, September 1958] when he came to find out what makes the American city a good or bad place to be in.

This in fact is a world-wide problem, except that the rest of the world has not realised it yet. Rotterdam, Roehampton, the Moscow suburbs, the *Hansaviertel* at Berlin, all share a fundamental lifelessness which makes the surface differences of architectural style seem unimportant and often a bit ludicrous. (Architectural style has never been more surface than at the moment, whatever the idealists may want to think; and the fault is not in the ideas of the modern movement, but in its practitioners.) Western Europe, with so many magnificent cities to draw on as pattern books, ought to have been able to see what is wrong with this brave new world and why: instead it has been left to a group of American non-architects to get to the roots of the problem, and that in an architectural climate where to challenge bigger and better development is regarded as some sort of subversive activity. Professional architectural opinion in America was apparently deeply shocked by Whyte's *Fortune* series: some obstreperous layman was rocking the goddam boat.

To extend this metaphor (now that I am stuck with it), what was rocking the boat was the sea itself, which has remained calm and uncomplaining for far too long: the sea of ordinary people in all their idiosyncrasy and variety of temperament, who should be the cause and object of every architectural effect. In London, they are beginning to experience a few examples of this new city pattern on the ground—not as seen from above the architectural model, or inside the aircraft cockpit.* The result is odd: disjointed, at the same time over-formal and formless, lacking any sense of imaginative pattern, chopped-up, monotonous, inhuman yet overcrowded—and this in a city whose outstanding virtue is in its contrasts and sudden incongruities and irrepressible vitality: the Billingsgate porter among the bowler hats, the Wren church and churchyard among the towering office blocks....

It is not that the people in these schemes are unhappy: no doubt they provide warm and weatherproof cells. It is just that the anonymity and needless formality have taken away any positive feeling of identification with the environment, any positive chance for individual expression—in some schemes even the curtains are controlled—which is so strong in the average Cockney terrace street with its freedom to be tidy or untidy, its corner shops and street stalls, its humane scale and its feeling of being part of a continuous a-formal pattern, starting in one recognisable place and ending in another. If this is nostalgia, it is nostalgia for the fundamental patterns of a lot of humans living together as individuals, not as a herd; and I am proud of it.

Abuse is an easy job. I should like rather to suggest five general qualities which might be applied to city redevelopment without merely producing a different brand of doctrinaire straitjacket.

First, (and most important of all) is every modern architect's shibboleth in principle and what so few are prepared to accept in practice: that buildings ought to fit the people who will use them. Not an "average person" but the actual people Mr. A. and Mrs. B. and Miss C. who are going to move in, seen as individuals with individual needs. If the result of this is not four or five "dwelling types" but forty or fifty individual dwellings, so much the better—the variety that architects try to infuse so feverishly into their buildings by ornamental surface patterns would start to come naturally, from the core of the architectural problem: the functional demands. There should be no build-

* Everything looks fine from the pilot's seat. The most sterile of formal schemes looks superb from a thousand feet on a sunny morning, and so does a borough engineer's Versailles of semi-detached houses. This is significant—neither has been designed at ground level. But, alas, we are not birds, and neither is architecture just an exercise in solid geometry.

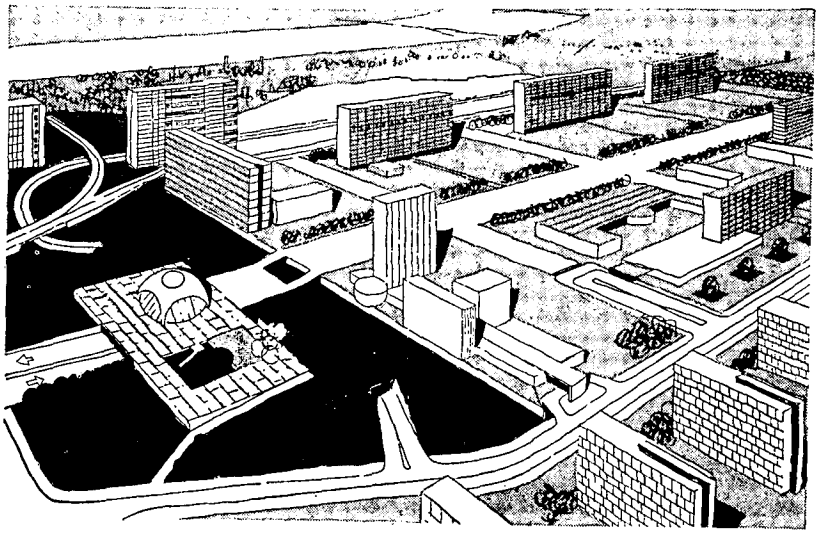
PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing for a mean, but simultaneous building for every kind of extreme; and everybody is extreme in one way or other. On a larger scale the city should be a place for everyone—tarts as well as good girls, spivs as well as model husbands and honest men. The city is the place of infinite choice, and what more important choice than that between good and evil or convention and freedom.

This is not to praise Naples or Port Said, where the choice is no choice and men choose evil because endemic misery and squalor may force them to. But there are now very few parts of any British city where this is true: the Gorbals and Salford, Notting Dale and parts of Liverpool and Leeds, but not many more. You can no more separate good and evil to create a clean, rational, social-minded city than you can separate the poles of a magnet.

Second, use-zoning is a disaster for the vitality of a city, which makes its impact from the multiplicity of things all thrown together. (London, again, is first-rate by accident: Covent Garden Opera and Covent Garden Market, Southwark Cathedral jammed next to the Southwark warehouses. Public health apart—and obviously, nobody wants to live next to a tannery or a sewage works—an "industrial area," a "neighbourhood unit," a "cultural centre," are fragments cut out of life and sewn up in antiseptic bags, like having a street full of cafés which only sell fish and chips, or a borough which is nothing but pubs next to a borough with none. Like things will naturally gravitate together—Hatton Garden, Whitehall, Bond Street jewellers and Charing Cross Road bookshops; but it is an organic accretion from functional and economic reasons, not an applied and artificial external direction. In this extreme form, non-zoning only really applies to cities, *i.e.*, to places whose essence is multiplicity of choice. In Piccadilly Circus you ought to be able to feel, as you can at the moment, that within a mile's radius you can do everything or anything, legal or illegal.

The next two things are visual points and should be taken for granted by town planners and architects. (They should be part of the first-year syllabus of any professional training; I doubt if they are.) The eye is a moving object set in a moving object; every sensation it gets is a continuous one, and static space only makes sense when the body and the eye have to stop in any case for an external reason—the central square, the church interior. Hence there must be some continuous change for the eye to hook on to: separate staccato impressions, however grand, merely cast it (and the body around it) adrift. This is the one overwhelming virtue of the continuous corridor street; and it is the overwhelming drawback of any arrangement of isolated blocks, however well-designed. The space between the blocks can be made continuous and pleasant with planting, but you then have a landscape park with buildings (*i.e.*, a suburb) and not a city. Making this landscape "urban" with a few tricks like cobblestones doesn't help much.



The eye takes in a straight vista all at once but cannot see round corners. In other words, any kind of purely rectangular layout does the same thing as staccato blocks do: it removes the continuity. Everything is seen all at once, and does not change at all on walking down the street. There is no build-up or progression, no chance of heightening the emotional effect of the city by surprise or contrast or holding back. Inevitably it defeats its own ends. The firm straight axis is far more effective when it is only used for important occasions and is met suddenly, and unexpectedly, coming from a tangle of angular and curved asymmetric streets

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and spaces. Equally, symmetry is a good servant but a bad master: it is the perfect aid to express the special case, the occasional formal need. But life itself, the everyday pattern, is sprawling, asymmetrical, unplanned.

Finally—and this is the one thing that nobody seems prepared to understand—in any sort of planning there can be no fixed rules, and in city redevelopment least of all. A big pedestrian precinct which would be essential to one centre might kill the life of another. Each place is different and may need different treatment; even cities as close together as Liverpool and Manchester have completely different sites, functional needs, temperament, and even climate. And, of course, none of the foregoing four points is a rigid rule either. If buildings-in-landscape is folly for nine city centres it may be just right for part of a tenth. The grid-iron has stunted the pattern of ninety-nine cities and made the hundredth—San Francisco—into a masterpiece. In nine words: look at people, look at places, think for yourselves....

That is my lot. It is an angry lot, and it is not likely to be a well-received lot. But unless it (or some less bad-tempered equivalent) is heeded, we will rapidly build ourselves an inhumane, cliché-ridden, and antiseptic nuthouse.

Ian Nairn

"*Pauvre Angletterre*"

Fifty Royal College of Art students paraded outside two new buildings in Knightsbridge yesterday crying: "PULL THEM DOWN!" *The buildings are Caltex House, costing just under one million pounds and not yet completed, and Agriculture House, which cost over £500,000 and was opened two years ago.*

The students, who have formed an Anti-Ugly Action Society, marched through Knightsbridge carrying banners and placards. It was the first of several planned operations. Their aim is better buildings.

The banners proclaimed: "UGLY BUILDINGS ARE A SIN!" "MUST BAD BUILDINGS SPEAK FOR BRITAIN?" *and* "LOOK AROUND YOU!" *The students marched from Hyde Park Corner to Knightsbridge accompanied by a drummer and a bugler....*

The students objected to Caltex House as "chaotic." There was no concerted scheme for the shops on the ground floor and the statue of three horses towering above was more suited to an Italian railway station.

In front of the Bowater building the procession paused for three hearty cheers: "WE APPROVE OF THAT!"

Outside Agriculture House the students shouted: "Outrageous!" Said Mr. Kullman: "This represents Stalinism in building. Stalin would have liked it. There is a complete misuse of classic ornament."

After the students had dispersed, passers-by were still studying slogans chalked on the pavement. One read: "PAUVRE ANGLETTERRE," *spelt with two "t's." Possibly preoccupation with modern architecture entails some neglect of modern languages.*

DAILY TELEGRAPH, 11 DECEMBER

The Historian's Risk

THE moral of Max Beloff's comparison between the controversy over the rôle of the gentry in Stuart England and the controversy over the adoption of the American Constitution seems to me to be soundly drawn; and it is the Editors' invitation, not a desire to dissent, which leads me to make a few observations that may both expand and amend Mr. Beloff's remarks about Charles Beard (ENCOUNTER, December 1958).

If the controversy over the gentry has grown heated at times, it is no more so than that inspired by Beard's book, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*. Witness, for instance, the lively anger shown by Professor Brown, in 1956, against a book written by Beard in 1913—a book whose argument Beard himself in some considerable measure gave up thirteen years before Professor Brown attacked it. It may help the layman to understand the intensity of the argument, if not the substance of the issues, to bear in mind that in the Beard controversy two different kinds of historians' temperaments are at war. Some historians approach their work as though they were engaged in the final death-grapple with error, as though every statement and every judgment they make were to be the last on the subject, as though mankind would never have a chance to modify or controvert their views. For those who work in the shadow of this sober and highly responsible but extremely rigid code, to err is not forgivable because it happens to be human; to criticise is to wield a lethal weapon; and one suspects that they are inwardly as demanding on themselves as they are outwardly on others.

Charles Beard seems to have had little understanding of historians of this breed, and has been still less understood by them in return. He was the sort of historian who is half a publicist, who attempts above all to relate his-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

torical enquiry to the current intellectual milieu and to current political problems, and who is willing to take the consequent risks—overstatement, partial views, and momentarily distorted perspectives. Such historians are hopefully aware that our social location, as Karl Mannheim once observed, may be as much a source of insight as it is of error. They are not altogether lacking in a sense of responsibility, but they tend to count on the continuing dialectic of historical enquiry, on the collective process of restatement and revision by the guild of historians as a whole, to make use of their insights and to shear off their errors. They expect that the historical guild will approach the truth not along a straight line but in a sequence of zigs and zags. If they are large-minded and generous men, as Beard usually was, they have the virtues of their defects: they are seldom surprised or embittered to find parts of their work becoming obsolete. Beard, for instance, was notably generous and helpful to young historians who took sharp issue with various of his historical views. And the note struck at the close of Mr. Beloff's essay—"surely it is time to remember how little we really know"—was one that kept recurring through all Beard's writings on the art of history.

Those who cannot look at the progress of historical enquiry in this way are more impatient with transient errors, more disposed to set absolute goals, more inclined to hope that each new monographic enquiry will have the rigour of a scientific experiment, and will finally settle this or that issue. With some justice, they ask whether it is always necessary to move towards a sounder understanding of events through a series of wasteful pendular swings in which one overstatement or error is expected in the end to cancel out another. Or, indeed, whether one can expect the pendulum ever to stop swinging.

Beard, of course, also had a stubborn and doctrinaire side, as his later isolationist tracts show all too well. But we should not, I think, deprive him of the credit he deserves for being among those who pointed the way to a revision of his own early interpretation of the Constitution. Mr. Beloff, unlike many of Beard's critics, does give him such credit, but so casually as to warrant a few more words on the subject. In his book, *The Republic*, published in 1943, Beard abandoned a good part of the interpretation set forth in his *Economic Interpretation*. In his *Basic History of the United States*, written in 1944 with Mary Beard, he presented what I think may be taken as his final view of the subject, which embraced interpretations that might have been considered conventional before 1913.

Beard's impulse, in receding from his earlier views, was, as always, a topical one. During the war he became obsessed with the conflict between military dictatorship and what he called civilian government; hence the achievement of the framers of the Constitution in circumventing the military dictatorship that was occasionally proposed in the American states during the 1780's, and in framing and adopting a wholly new form of government without resort to violence, loomed large in his mind.

Both the formation of Beard's book and the subsequent changes in its reputation were profoundly influenced by the prevailing intellectual mood. When it appeared in 1913, it took much of its significance (as Mr. Beloff remarks) from the background of Progressive social criticism and the muck-raking movement. During the 1920's, its influence continued to grow, not because the intellectuals were radical or even very political, but because they had become alienated from their country. Beard's book had the merit that it could still be used to shock. In an age of debunking it could be read as a debunking work. For many readers in the 1930's it assumed still another, this time a Marxist, hue; and by now among historians, whether Marxist or not, it had settled into a kind of orthodoxy. During the war Beard himself became one of the first to reconsider its argument, though hardly with great effect. The historical profession as a whole did not follow him until the post-war neo-conservative climate of opinion set in. We are now undergoing a series of historical revisions in which major episodes in American political conflict, from Bacon's rebellion in the 17th century down through Jacksonianism and Populism to the New Deal, are likely to be re-examined. The tendency of the latest historical writing in the United States is to look at the *côté gauche* with a hard-boiled rather than a sentimental eye, to minimise or downgrade the intensity of past social conflicts, and to restore other than severely economic interpretations to the centre of interest. Louis Hartz's recent book, *The Liberal Tradition in America*, which argues that American political differences are in most cases hardly more than minor deviations from a common Lockean-liberal centre embracing almost all elements in society, is perhaps the most significant straw in the wind.

Mr. Beloff does me a slight injustice when he cites me (from an article first written in 1950 and reprinted in the Beard memorial volume) as having given "particular credit to Beard's use of sources." This I did not do—not, alas, because I was then astute enough to have seen how frequently Beard had misused his sources, but simply because I had not retraced enough

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of Beard's path through the sources to be able to say, without presumption, that his use of them was either good or bad. I *had* read the debates on the Federal Convention of 1787, having a particular interest in Beard's interpretation of the political thought of its members; and in this instance I found Beard's reading of the sources unsatisfactory. I observed in my article that Beard's chapter on the political ideas of the framers of the Constitution was a "rather casual treatment," a "literal-minded compound of scattered quotes from the debates," and concluded that he had retailed the content of the framers' ideas "without any effort to place them in the framework of 18th-century thought."

Mr. Beloff correctly quotes me, however, as having said that Beard's account of the struggle over the Constitution was "a triumph of systematic intelligence." "Triumph" was indeed unfortunate, for I had no inkling what an *ex parte* case Beard had made of his data. But what I had in mind, as I hope the context of this remark made clear, was not Beard's use of sources but rather that in 1913 he was beginning to develop a kind of systematic enquiry which is sometimes known in England as "structural analysis." Beard's book appeared sixteen years before Sir Lewis Namier's *Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III*; and though Beard's may be considered a far less enduring book, it seemed to me then, as indeed it still does, to have been a pioneering work in systematic historical enquiry. I was trying to suggest in my essay that this method might well have been adopted by American historians, and "refined and applied systematically to the major events and movements in American history." My admiration for Beard's suggestive innovation in technique has survived the discovery (which we owe to such critics as Miss Kenyon and Professor Brown) that his particular application of it was so vulnerable.

Richard Hofstadter

"Expulsada"

A Personal Note on Police Censorship in Spain

THE policeman was waiting on the doorstep of my home in Palma de Mallorca last month, when I returned from a shopping expedition. He was a *Guardia Civil*, with shiny, black patent-leather hat, a comic opera cloak, and the usual fine array of guns and cartridges stuck in his belt. I was mildly irritated, as I was coming down with 'flu, and had planned to go straight to bed. However, he was very amiable, and asked to see our passports. My papers were in order, my conscience was clear—I asked him inside.

With the help of several glasses of wine and a plate of olives, he examined the passports. It took him more than an hour to read them from front to back, from back to front, upside down, and right side up. Laboriously, with much rubbing out and licking of pencil stub, he recorded the facts contained in them.

My husband was a painter, and I was a writer? What odd professions! I agreed with him. We had been living in Palma for five months, in Ibiza for six months before that, and previously for two years in Andalusia? Quite right. My husband had a beard? *Madre mia!* And he was at present in Ibiza, collecting the children from a holiday? *Conforme*. The children—were they large ones? They were nine and five, I told him, and their names were Christopher and Michael. The policeman rubbed and licked incredulously. What odd names the English have!

By the time all these significant facts were recorded, we were old friends. The policeman finished off the carafe of wine, shook hands with me, arranged for my husband to report to Police Headquarters when he returned next day, commended my soul to God, and stumped away down the road. Old Maria, from the shop next door, who had been hovering anxiously outside, came bustling in.

"You're not to worry," she assured me, trembling like a leaf.

I laughed at her.

"You've been living in a police state too long," I said. "Of course I'm not worried. It's probably just a routine check of all foreigners in the district."

Next day Malcolm, my husband, as unconcerned as I was, reported to the Passport Section of the Security Police in Palma.

"I believe you want to see me," he said.

"That's right," said the police clerk casually. "You and your wife and family have just 72 hours to leave Spain for ever. Which frontier will you leave by?"

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Malcolm stared at him.

"But *why*?"

"There is no reason given. We have a telegram from His Excellency, the Director-General of Security in Madrid."

"Show me the telegram."

The clerk looked shocked.

"I can't do that," he said.

Neither then, nor at any time afterwards, in spite of repeated demands, were we given an official reason for our expulsion, nor shown any written document relating to it. We had simply to accept the spoken word of this official, and later of others in Madrid.

"What happens if we refuse to leave?" asked Malcolm.

The clerk shrugged.

"You go to prison."

"All right—that suits me fine. It will give us more time to get to the bottom of this nonsense."

The clerk looked alarmed, and scuttled off to consult his superior. They returned together.

"We should not dream of sending you to prison, Señor Horsley," said the Head of the Passport Section suavely. "We shall merely escort you and your family by force to the nearest border, and leave you there."

"You are too kind," said Malcolm. "At least it sounds a cheap way to travel."

"Ah, but you would pay your own expenses, and also those of the police escort," he replied. "Naturally."

The police then seized our passports, and Malcolm left, feeling a little stunned, to break the news to me. At first I couldn't believe it. And not until we were crossing the frontier into Andorra three days later did I really believe that the order would be enforced. We have made many friends in Spain in the three years we have lived there—friends, among others, in the legal profession, the Intelligence Service, and the secret police. And in Spain, with influential friends, it is nearly always possible to arrange something. In fact, as a high official of our acquaintance in the Intelligence Service told Malcolm in Madrid next day, if we had been Russian spies, actually in the pay of Russia, and with a rank in the Russian army, he could have arranged for us to stay by claiming us for counter-espionage. He had done as much for friends before. He could arrange, he said, *echar una capote* (to throw a cloak) over the whole affair.

Unfortunately, we were not Russian, nor any other kind of spies. We had not, like some foreigners we knew, been running contraband. We were not immoral, drunk and disorderly, actively anti-Catholic, or anything at all that we could think of. What, then, was the reason for our expulsion?

We found out that afternoon, as we waited in the home of a well-known Spanish writer, who was trying to rally others to our aid. The British Consul was consulted, judges and secret policemen were contacted by telephone, little Spanish lawyers crept furtively in and out, clutching portfolios. I sat in a corner, feeling like an extra in a second-feature film.

Eventually, our friend put down the phone.

"You were denounced," he said, "by the Governor of Málaga."

"Good heavens!" I exclaimed, "it must have been my book."

THE book, *To-morrow is Mañana*, had been published in England by John Murray over a year before. It described our family life in a little fishing village in the province of Málaga, and the daily life of the villagers. I loved the people and the village, as I love Spain itself, and every page reflected this affection. The book was not, in any sense, a political one. Such criticisms of the régime as were implied in it were social rather than political. I described the poverty of the fishermen, which was both real and obvious, I described the effects of the Civil War on the village, still visible after twenty years. In one chapter, called "On Not Seeing Franco," I gave a light-hearted account of the Leader's state visit to the city of Málaga, of the great preparations that were made, the decorations, the excitement of the people. The point of the chapter was that the security arrangements proved to be so good that no one, at least from our village, actually saw him at all.

That was the nearest I came to politics, and it never occurred to me that I and my family should be banished because of it, so long after the book's first publication. In fact, in recent years, my Spanish friends assure me, censorship regulations have become increasingly enlightened. Many foreign writers live and work in Spain, producing books which are directly political and anti-régime. But the government has learnt, as the Spaniards say, *tragar su saliva* (to swallow its own saliva) and permit them to stay.*

* Events in the last few weeks would seem to indicate that the brief period of toleration may be over. Following our expulsion, my own book, I'm told, has just been banned in Spain, appearing on the black list among such distinguished and varied company as Kant, Stendhal, Hemingway, and Françoise Sagan. A far more serious indication of the same tightening-up process is the present wave of arrests of Spanish socialists by the notorious 'Special Brigade' of political police, under Colonel Aymar.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Why, then, was my book selected for special treatment? We found out later, through the unofficial enquiries of the British Embassy in Madrid, and through the back-door activities of our Spanish friends, that it was because *Tomorrow is Mañana* had recently, just two months before our expulsion, been published again—this time in the United States. Here it had been widely reviewed in American publications, and frequently praised as an objective and well-balanced account of one aspect of Spanish life. One or two took me to task for being "too objective," and not sufficiently critical of the régime and the poverty of the people. (*Time*, ironically enough, compared my book favourably with another book on Spain which came out about the same time, attacking the authors for dwelling too long on the fact that Spain is a police state.) It was the American reviews, rather than the book itself, which upset the Spanish authorities. Because of the importance of American dollars to Spain, they are more touchy about the shortcomings of the régime being paraded before the American public, than they were about the British. The same week that the American reviews appeared, we discovered, the Spanish police began to look for us.

Malcolm decided to fly to Madrid next day to try and get the expulsion order rescinded—or at least apply for an extension of time to arrange our affairs. In the meantime we returned to the house that was no longer our home, and began the sad and hasty job of packing. We discarded toys and clothes, threw essentials into suitcases, and tried not to meet the anxious eyes of our huge and much-loved dog, Lobo, who would have to be left behind. We burnt papers, and hid the half-finished MS. of my next book on Spain —for in this strange new film-world in which we found ourselves, a police search of the house seemed not unlikely.

Our chief embarrassment in this connection were two skulls in a haversack, left with us for safe keeping by a friend who wanted them for book-ends. We did not feel equal, at the moment, to explaining their existence to the police. So next morning, on his way to the airport, Malcolm took them on his back to throw them into Palma Harbour. Unluckily, they were so old and dry that they floated—a complication we had not foreseen. The last time we saw them, as we hurried away, they were bobbing relentlessly about near the shore, watched in paralysed astonishment by a little cluster of the *S.V.F.* (*Servicio de Vigilancia Fiscal*), the anti-contraband water police. Those skulls seemed like a symbol of the end of our life in Spain.

My husband arrived in Madrid without interference, except that his overnight bag was removed from the plane—whether by accident or design he didn't know—when it touched down at Barcelona, so he found himself in the capital without so much as a toothbrush. He rang our friend in the Intelligence Service, and met him under suitably mysterious circumstances in a back-street café. He saw the British Consul and the First Secretary at the Embassy in Madrid, and they decided to make preliminary unofficial enquiries, and also to read my book, a copy of which was in the Embassy library. They suggested that he try to arrange an interview with His Excellency, the Director-General of Security, who had sent the telegram, ordering our expulsion, to Palma.

His Excellency (whose office hours for the afternoon begin at 6.30 p.m.) refused an interview, but Malcolm decided, as he was already in the building, that he would try and gain admittance to the Archives where the secret files are kept. He climbed a broken wooden staircase to the top floor which had no windows, walked down a number of long corridors, and through a number of heavy doors marked *Entrance Strictly Forbidden*. He discovered a promising door (*Foreigners—Entrance Strictly Forbidden*), opened it, and found himself in a huge, dark room, lined with over a quarter of a million numbered folios—records of all foreigners who live and who have lived in Spain. There were also special sections, he noticed, devoted to foreign radio and periodicals. As he had penetrated so far, so brazenly, his presence was accepted without question, though with some surprise. A small, dumpy woman with a face like a bloodhound, and a long, grey dress almost to her ankles, came forward to attend to him. He asked to see our file, and she obediently began to run up and down ladders, searching for it. At one point, she knocked several files to the floor, spilling their contents into confusion. Tripping down the ladder, she gathered up handfuls of papers, and thrust them casually into the nearest folder. (Perhaps, even now, someone is being expelled from Spain for a "crime" committed by his alphabetical neighbour in the next folder.)

The Chief of the Archives returned from lunch at that moment (it was about 7 p.m.), and joined companionably in the search. After some time he unearthed our file on his own desk, waiting, as he explained apologetically, to be placed with the EXPULSADOS—a very exclusive little shelf containing only two slim volumes of those expelled during 1957 and 1958.

He glanced through the file with great interest, but refused to show it to Malcolm, who once again asked for a withdrawal of the ex-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pulsion order, or at least an extension of time, on the grounds that I was ill with 'flu, and not fit to travel. The Chief went away to discuss the matter with His Excellency, and returned, looking impressed. The expulsion order, he said, had come directly and personally from no less a person than Don Camilo Alonso Vega, the Minister for the Interior himself, and could only be rescinded by the Minister. He was strictly forbidden to give the reason for the order, or to authorise a postponement. It was, explained the Chief of the Archives, very unusual and therefore something of an honour to be thrown out of Spain by the Minister personally, for next to Franco, he is the most influential *politico* in the country. Malcolm, the Chief suggested, was not sufficiently sensible of the honour being done to his family. (Later, in a back-street café, our friend in the Intelligence Service, who had gathered the same information independently, also regarded Malcolm with awe. Had Malcolm, he asked, been making advances to the Leader's wife? For no less a reason would the Minister interest himself personally in our case.)

Malcolm returned to the Embassy, where the Consul had finished reading the book, and expressed great surprise at the fuss it was causing. He mentioned the names of half-a-dozen British writers living in Spain, whose works were "much more worthy of attention" (from Franco's point of view) than mine. The Ambassador, he said, would lodge an official diplomatic note on our behalf, and send a report to the Foreign Office in London. Meanwhile, we should be well advised to leave the country within the allotted 72 hours.

By now there was no time for Malcolm to return to Palma to help me with the luggage and the children. I finished the packing with a high temperature, leaving our books and household goods behind. I had to leave all my husband's paintings, too, as it was impossible to have them crated, and complete the necessary formalities in two days. I delivered our trembling dog to a friend, and sailed off to Barcelona with his howls still ringing in my ears.

Malcolm, who had flown from Madrid, met the boat, and as time was running short, we hired an ancient taxi to drive us to the Andorran border, high in the Pyrenees. Five minutes before the frontier closed for the night, we reached it. The frontier policeman, with an air of relief, ticked our names on a paper in front of him.

"Are you leaving Spain?" he enquired—somewhat unnecessarily.

He followed Malcolm's glance to the taxi, piled high with children and suitcases, saw the look in his eye, and hastily stamped our passports for the last time.

"I see you are," he said. "God be with you."

Shirley Deane

The Boys Who Cried Wolfenden

UNTIL quite recently it was still statutorily possible for a man convicted of treason to be hanged until he was half dead, disembowelled, and cut into four pieces which were subsequently boiled and put on public show. It is true that the last traitor to be treated in this way was disposed of on Kennington Common in 1746; but although it seemed unlikely that public opinion would ever again tolerate the imposition of the extreme penalty, Members of Parliament could not bring themselves to vote for its abolition. As one of them said in 1814, they considered that such a step would be "a mischievous attempt to unsettle public opinion with respect to the enormity of these atrocious offences," and in consequence this even more atrocious punishment remained technically in force in England until 1870, and in Scotland until 1948. The most usual objections to this and many other legal reforms of the 19th century were threefold. First, it was held (especially by the Law Lords) that there were large numbers of British citizens who had no moral standards except those enforced by fear of the law, and that to remove or even to mitigate the punishment for any particular crime would give a widespread impression that Parliament was condoning it, and therefore immediately increase its incidence. This was the argument put forward by Lord Justice Ellenborough when he opposed the abolition of the death penalty for thefts of five shillings in 1810. "I am convinced with the rest of the Judges," he said, "that public expediency requires that there should be no remission of the terror denounced against this description of offenders. Such will be the consequences of the repeal of this statute that I am certain depredations to an unlimited extent will immediately be committed." The second argument followed naturally from this: it was that the law of the land was a sacred part of its tradition, something that had been handed down as reverently as the tablets of Moses from the mountain, and which therefore must remain undisturbed with all its imperfections. "If the law (with respect to hanging, drawing, and quartering) were to be suggested *de novo* to-day," the Solicitor-General

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

assured the House, "I would be the last man to sanction such a sentence. But does it therefore follow that I should consent to alter the law which has been established for centuries?" The third argument consisted of the contention, however difficult to believe, that any reform would in fact work to the disadvantage of the very persons whom the reformers were trying to assist. The House of Commons was informed that the punishment of disembowelling and boiling, "though in appearance theoretically severe, was in reality practically humane," and in later years was able to convince itself that there was no demand whatever from shop assistants for a 74-hour week (which, according to one M.P., "would cause to degenerate the moral fibre of the people") or from six-year-old boy chimneysweeps for the discontinuance of their craft.

The causes against which these objections were raised have long since been won, but the objections themselves are still being flourished with as much confidence as if they had never been blunted or stained by the uses to which they have been put. The whole armoury was brought out once more during the debates in the House of Lords and the House of Commons which followed, at a gingerly distance, the publication of the Wolfenden Report.

I know that some of those whose hobby it is to be ahead of intellectual fashion have by now advanced from tolerance, by way of the inanities of "A Room in Chelsea Square" and the jokes in the Christmas numbers of the literary weeklies, to a position of incipient boredom with the whole subject which will turn into reaction at the drop of a hat. They will object at this point that homosexuals are seldom even sent to prison for life, let alone hanged, drawn, and quartered, and that the whole parallel is therefore far-fetched. They should remember the two men who gassed themselves at Bilston in Staffordshire as a consequence of "police enquiries" two weeks after Parliament had talked itself to a standstill over the Wolfenden Report, and the many others who have had their careers dismembered and their lives exposed to view in the cooked-up stories of the Sunday press. The 19th century had no monopoly of cruelty; apathy and vote-snatching will claim a good many victims yet. Meanwhile, let us consider Lord Justice Denning, a man with a reputation for humanity who would probably dissociate himself from Lord Justice Ellenborough, yet who speaks with his voice. "The trouble is," he told the House of Lords, "that in all these cases the law must either condemn or condone. Because is it not the case that for so many people now it is the law alone which sets the standard? If you reprove such a one for his conduct, he will say 'Why should I not do it? There is no law against it.' It is said that it is the personal responsibility of the individual. I am afraid that Hell fire and eternal damnation hold no terrors nowadays." There could hardly be a more striking example of the effect upon the judicial mind of always seeing humanity at its degraded worst. In this view of the world there is no place for conscience, and every man would be wicked if he were not held in check by fear. It ignores the existence of vast numbers of citizens who do not believe in "Hell fire and eternal damnation" but who nevertheless manage to restrain themselves from behaviour which they believe to be wrong even though it is not legally punishable.

THE Home Secretary, Mr. R. A. Butler, saw in Lord Denning's observations a welcome excuse for inactivity and amplified them further: "We have to reflect that many people who are outside the influence of religion find no other basis for their notions of right and wrong but in the criminal law. Can we be sure that if we removed the support of the criminal law from these people that they would find any other support?" It is difficult to see why Mr. Butler did not propose, later in his speech, to solve the problem of prostitution by locking up all the presumably agnostic night-prowlers of Soho and Bayswater (which he could do quite well under the existing laws) by way of giving them moral support and a basis for their notions of right and wrong, instead of merely chivvying the tarts. But in one respect at least the Home Secretary was consistent. Apart from a happy topical twist, he reproduced the 1814 speech of the Solicitor-General almost word for word by asking: "If we were drawing up a code for the first colonists in the moon, should we make this kind of offence a criminal offence? I am in some doubt whether we might or might not." (No such doubts occurred to the eminent Professor of Astronomy who wrote in the *Sunday Times* some years ago that if healthy young men were to be isolated in space for long periods, "new codes of morality" would have to be evolved which, according to present standards, might appear pretty unearthly.)

It was not long before other Members were taking up the third of the usual points: in this case, that homosexuals benefited from the present law in much the same way that a fox or stag is said to benefit from being hunted. Mr. Shepherd, the Conservative Member for Cheadle (in Staffordshire, where the suicides were later to take place) said: "I want to discourage the homosexual by the discouragement of the law, because the homosexual in society has a very difficult place indeed. He becomes against

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

society. He becomes bitter, his mind becomes twisted and distorted because he feels he is not as other men are. It is essential in the interests of the man himself that we should do everything to discourage him." It did not seem to have crossed Mr. Shepherd's mind that it might be society, as much as the homosexual, which was making the relationship between them "difficult," nor that the chaining up of lunatics had discredited such forceful methods of encouraging conformism.

These were the dominant themes; there were others not worth criticising, such as Mr. Shinwell's clownish interruptions and the remarkable scientific conclusion of Dr. Broughton that it was "biologically wrong" for men to walk about holding hands. One cannot help, however, saluting the courage of Mr. Fred Bellenger and Mrs. Jean Mann in nakedly admitting that they were more interested in votes than in matters of principle. The two-party system which we at present enjoy will always throw up a few types like these and their Tory counterparts, who have no very clear idea of the distinction between delegates and representatives. As it happens, I believe Mrs. Mann was being unduly timid when she painted a picture of working-class opinion solidly opposed to the Wolfenden proposals; but she has been in Parliament for a long time and may not have met any members of the working class lately. The *Daily Mirror* poll showed that its readers were almost evenly divided, several of the women's organisations of which Mrs. Mann stands in such awe have debated the proposals quite calmly, and not long ago the Railway Review and a Local Government magazine both gave favourable reviews of my book "Against the Law"—the former under the cherished headline: I EARNESTLY RECOMMEND THIS BOOK TO ALL RAILWAYMEN. Furthermore, I seem to remember that the pro-Wolfenden resolution submitted to (but never debated by) the last annual Labour Party Conference came from Brighouse and Spenborough, a constituency noted for the production of iron ingots and bales of wool rather than of lace mittens.

WHAT happens now? As Sir Hugh Linstead has pointed out, the prosecution of homosexuals has become a kind of grotesque lottery, in which a hundred men out of a possible 500,000 are annually selected to face the further hazard of coming up before either Mr. Justice A., who signed the Wolfenden Report, or Mr. Justice B., who would rather sign his own death warrant. No one has attempted to explain how this is consistent with even the most elementary standards of justice. The mildest attempts to educate Parliamentary opinion, taking the form of letters to the *Times* from people like the Archbishop of Canterbury and Lady Cynthia Colville, are treated by M.P.s (and by the *Sunday Times*), as if they were part of a blood-curdling conspiracy by international homosexual gangs. The professional guild of Scottish unco' guids goes on repeating its lies about underground movements with 14,000 members and a directory of public lavatories—a reference, one can only suppose, to the International Committee for Sexual Equality in Amsterdam (the only organisation of comparable size), which sends out a monthly newsletter of stupefying respectability devoid even of pen-pal advertisements. In the meantime, in dull provincial towns where the niceties of political expediency are not understood, men go on putting their heads in gas ovens and leaving notes asking their relatives to bury them together. It seems a pity that their only epitaph should be the voices of Mr. Bellenger saying that he doesn't believe "this fancy talk of love and affection," and of Mr. Butler saying that "the time is not yet ripe."

Peter Wildeblood

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mme. de Beauvoir in China

By G. F. Hudson

TO-DAY the passionate pilgrims in search of the New Jerusalem go not to Moscow, but to Peking. Since 1949 there have been hardly any of those rapturous appreciations which used to flow from the pens of visitors to the Soviet Union in the 'twenties and 'thirties, but there has been a similar outpouring from many of those who have done the grand tour of Communist China. Even before Khrushchev brought out of the Soviet cupboard a few of the skeletons whose existence had been so long and so persistently denied by all comrades and fellow-travellers, there were indications that some of the most devoted of Russia's foreign admirers were beginning to undergo a disenchantment and to look eastward for fresh inspiration; it was a sign of the times when Annie Louise Strong asked the Kremlin for a visa to go to China, and the Soviet authorities had no way of dealing with her straying affections but to denounce her publicly as an "American spy." Whatever the reason, Communist Russia, now forty years old, appears to possess no longer for the amateur of revolutionary utopias the glamour which belongs to the Chinese People's Republic in the tenth year of its history.

There is still, no doubt, among the Chinese Communists a naïve fanatical enthusiasm such as formerly existed, but has almost disappeared, in Russia, and it is this quality which communicates itself to the foreign visitor and fills him—or her—with a sense of fervent aspiration and purposive social endeavour not to be found in non-totalitarian societies. As against the infection of revolutionary fervour, the propagandist explanations and the real achievements which can be shown to the visitor, there is nothing to set to the debit of the account unless the traveller is willing to reflect on the conditions of testimony to be expected in a country whose government not long ago had the sounds of mass executions broadcast by radio for the benefit of those who were not compelled to attend them. In a democratic country, or even under an authoritarian régime of the milder type, the foreigner who desires to discover the truth hears not only the official publicity but also opinions and criticisms which do not conform to it. This is certainly not so in China, where totalitarian constraint has achieved an outward unanimity even more overwhelming than that of its Soviet model. Robert Guillain, in his book *The Blue Ants*, points out how in China "lips repeat only what may be repeated or are sealed," so that "the mutual distrust, the fear, the liquidation of the individual personality for the good of the group" remain unseen and unheard by the unwary traveller, whereas "the material achievements leap to the eye and the organised cries of the crowd impinge incessantly upon the ear."

Madame de Beauvoir* certainly belongs to Guillain's category of those who are not prepared to admit that people in China may have thoughts or feelings which they do not express to casual acquaintances. But so great was her zeal for the new régime in China, even before her arrival there, that it is unlikely that she would have given any credence or sympathy to dissident views, even if they had been communicated to her. While still in the airliner on the way to Peking, she saw only, in her own words, "this stirring and reasonable revolution which had not only delivered peasants and workers from exploitation, but had rid an entire land of the foreigner." Since she was already so certain of

* *The Long March*. By SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR. André Deutsch and Weidenfeld & Nicolson. 42s.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the truth before she reached China, she had little difficulty in adapting reality to her ideal, with the help of official hospitality and obliging cadres always ready to provide any information required. She acquired knowledge "by actually seeing places and talking with people, in terms of China's past and in the perspective of the changes to come in the future." She is very insistent on the need to judge the present by the future; "only when one grasps the future," she writes, "does this country become clear." With regard to knowledge of the future, it is hard to dispute Madame de Beauvoir's clairvoyance; most of us do not claim to know the future of the world or of China, and if we are unconvinced by the prescience of this Paris lady of letters, it is a doubt which only the future course of history can resolve. But of Madame de Beauvoir's claim to describe China's present in terms of its past it is possible to speak somewhat more definitely, since there is considerably more evidence about China's past than about its future.

On the second page of the book the author declares that "ancient China did not interest me much"; if this is so, it is strange that the jacket of the book should claim, on the basis of reviews of the French edition by *The Times Literary Supplement* and the *New Statesman*, that "her familiarity with Chinese history and culture adds authority to a masterly picture of contemporary life." It is difficult to find traces of this alleged familiarity with Chinese history and culture, even though historical allusions are frequent and there is a whole chapter devoted to culture. As a competent Marxist, she has some interesting things to say about traditional Chinese society, but she frequently gets her facts wrong in a way which indicates a profound ignorance of anything but the barest outline of Chinese history; nobody, for example, with any knowledge of the Chinese civilisation of the T'ang and Sung epochs could say, as she does, that Ch'an Buddhism was a form of Amidism. What is most remarkable, however, is that her disparagement of the old Chinese civilisation—in which, according to her, "art, instead of forcing the gates of a to-morrow of infinite possibilities, remained a pale and idle pastime"—is not simply, as might be expected, the iconoclasm of a revolutionary eager to remove everywhere the dead hand of the past from the society of the new age. The Chinese past is continually compared greatly to its disadvantage with former epochs of Europe in a manner highly reminiscent of the special pleading of certain Christian missionaries who felt it necessary to denigrate Eastern cultures in order to affirm the superiority of nations which accepted Christianity. Is it possible that it is the old Adam—or perhaps it

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

should be the old Eve—of European ethnocentrism which reasserts itself now that the "heathen Chinee" is receiving from Europe the enlightenment, no longer of the Christian Church, but of Marxism-Leninism?

Extraordinary indeed is the author's remark that it is so "odd" that China, "this country of plains," should appear in much of Chinese art as a land of mountains. If Madame de Beauvoir thinks that China is exclusively a flat country, that is presumably because she never happened to travel in any of the parts of it that are mountainous, but, after all, she has only to consult a map which shows elevations in order to see for herself how large a portion of it is not flat. However, the author's ignorance of geography provides merely an appropriate background for her scornful attack on the great heritage of Chinese painting. She is entitled to her own opinions on the merits of this art, but she might at least recognise that a number of eminent Western critics who have studied it have regarded it as among the highest achievements of human civilisation and hesitate before laying down the law in so portentous a fashion. She has discovered that "one of the curious things about Chinese art" is that the brush is used for both painting and writing—which is like saying that "one of the curious things about European art" is the fact that most of it is in oils. On the basis of an assumption that writing can have no place in a picture she dismisses the whole of *Wên Jên* painting without further ado. She declares that "compared to Western painting the meaning-content of Chinese pictures appears slender, their plastic quality monotonous"; it never seems to occur to her that this response may be due to an utter unfamiliarity with the imaginative themes and myths which are the subjects of the paintings and a total lack of education in the formal qualities which the Chinese traditionally look for in pictures. It is only to be expected that the more subtle values of this tradition should no longer be appreciated by the æsthetic censors of a party which claims the right to control literature and art as instruments of propaganda while its heart is in the construction of steel mills. But it is something of a tragedy that a figure of cultural repute from the city which has been for nearly a century the principal centre of the world's art, a fellow-countrywoman of Cézanne, Matisse, Braque, and Bonnard, should go to Peking to inform the Chinese that they have no great art except for a few early paintings whose "realism often reminds one of Holland and Flanders."

In one respect Madame de Beauvoir is deserving of sympathy; her sojourn in China was in 1955–56, when the trend was towards a relaxation of the régime, and much of what she has written in defence of it (especially about the position of the Chinese intellectuals under Communism) has already been refuted by the intensified repression since the end of the "Hundred Flowers" experiment in the middle of 1957. However, although she pays lip-service to the proposition that China "must become more liberal," there is little ground in this book for supposing that Madame de Beauvoir would be upset by any degree of coercion which appeared to be required for the maintenance of Communist rule in China. Nor in China only; Madame de Beauvoir considers that only Communism can promote and carry out the economic planning needed by underdeveloped countries, and that therefore it is the one "hope for the peoples of Asia." It is apparently not quite so essential in her view for the countries of Europe, and indeed that is just as well, for if the Communists governed France, progressive intellectuals like herself and Sartre would no longer be able to indulge in the satisfactions of contemplating the Marxist-Leninist ideal from a safe distance without having their own lives and thoughts regulated by party functionaries.

Communism, it seems, is just the thing for backward peoples. For China it was "the only possible way out," and any other "sane" govern-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ment, "had it been in the Communists' place, would have done what they are doing." This invocation of historical necessity is quite unconvincing if account is taken of how much has been achieved in India since 1947, and of how the issue hung in the balance in China itself after the end of the Pacific war. Even after making every allowance for the pressures of over-population and mass poverty in Asia, the lack of parliamentary or democratic traditions, the special difficulties of a retarded industrialisation, and in China the devastations of three decades of civil war and Japanese invasions, there is still no compelling force in the argument that there is "no choice" but between Communism and stagnation. In Japan, India, and the Middle East it can be otherwise; even in China it could be otherwise to-morrow, given certain possible conditions. We have to deal with Mao's régime as a fact of the contemporary world, but there is no need to regard it as the final and irrevocable outcome of Chinese history.

Montgomery

The Memoirs of Field Marshal Montgomery. *Collins.* 35s.

WE ARE now so far distant in time from VE Day as was the spring of 1932—the beginning of the New Deal—from Armistice Day. A whole generation has grown to manhood to whom the events of the Second World War are merely the incomprehensible recital of "old unhappy far-off things and battles long ago"; it is now history in the accepted sense of the word, and the field of the scholar rather than the *raconteur*. But thanks to the strides that have been made in gerontology, most of the key figures of the war are still alive, and among the historians—amateur and professional—it has been felt that there was one key figure yet to speak, one personal narrative called for to supplement the personal narratives of Eisenhower, Churchill, Bradley, or Truman, one set of reflections needed to support and justify a wealth of *obiter dicta*.

In this respect Montgomery's memoirs are disappointing. As a contribution to history, they throw very little new light upon the great events which he describes. The account of El Alamein is patchy and omits any reference to the awkward days when the battle was not going according to the Army Commander's plan. His account of the historic controversies to which the campaign in North-West Europe has given rise for a decade-and-a-half, are either familiar or else carry a sad overtone of *post hoc* self-justification which his wider reputation makes unnecessary. Thus he is quite right to remind his readers that the general strategy of the bridgehead called for the British and Canadians to pin down the German armour and give the Americans the opportunity to break out on the right. But anyone who remembers the atmosphere of the bridgehead and the context in which such costly operations as Goodwood, the attack of the Guards Armoured Division south of Caen, were planned, remembers also that any such cool master-planning gave way to a desperate need to break out of a ring, no matter where, that was daily growing stronger at every point. Similarly, in his account of plans to break into Germany, his exposure of the woolliness of Eisenhower's directives covers ground that even Eisenhower himself has traversed; while his attempt to justify his own failure to open the Scheldt in September 1944, and thus give the allies a firmer logistical base, merely accentuates rather than explains the one major strategic blunder of which he was guilty.

But this book is both more readable and more illuminating than its historical value would suggest. For beneath the occasional pomposities, the staccato style, the padding with official statements and messages, the man himself makes brief and shy appearances. By far the best thing in the book are the few pages in which he describes how he reversed the fading morale of the Eighth Army before El Alamein. The rest of the book is in some measure a commentary on that achievement; of his deprived boyhood and joyless battle with a tough mother, his starveling youth, of marriage with a woman whose Christian name he is too shy to mention more than twice; his belief in people rather than systems, as shown in his general contempt for the figures of the military Establishment and his devotion to the few, notably Alanbrooke and Alexander, who transcended its limitations; above all his belief in careful staff work, rather than the intuitive hunch, as the basis of success in battle. Though this book adds little to his stature as a military commander, it does add cubits to his stature as a human being, for there is more generosity, more regret, more candour than one had believed him capable of. In fact the man who (deliberately) lies concealed beneath the 550-odd pages of the book is not the aggressive publicity-seeker of common renown, but a shy, awkward, and lonely man—the stuff of which great commanders, Wolfe and Moore, Wellington and Haig, were in fact made.

Montgomery was the greatest field commander whom the British have produced since Welling-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ton; but a comparison between the Duke and Monty is instructive. Both were comparatively young men when their hour of victory struck, their background and their experience were not dissimilar, the awe in which both were held was built upon an "infinite capacity for taking pains." But the Duke, for all his reactionary views, remained one of the central figures in English public life for over thirty years thereafter and, when he died, the nation, Radicals and Chartists as much as Tories, wept in the streets at the passing of the greatest English figure of their day. He had long passed from being a military to being a political leader, with all the flair for the possible that political leadership implies. Montgomery by contrast has remained a purely military figure, brooding with continuing brilliance upon the military implications of the nuclear age, but regarding politicians merely as school prefects to be confronted with their duty. The Duke shaped, though he could not alter, the course of English history. Montgomery remains a voice crying in the wilderness for a "tidy" organisation, both in national and international politics, whereby politicians do what soldiers think they ought.

The reader's principal reaction to these memoirs may be to bless the existence of politicians, short-sighted and pressure-ridden though they are. A great soldier he remains, a human being he becomes, as a consequence of this book; a great national figure, in the sense of Marlborough or Wellington, or even Grant or Eisenhower, he precludes himself from being.

Alastair Buchan

The Fable of 2034 A.D.

The Rise of the Meritocracy. By Michael Young. *Thames & Hudson.* 15s.

In order to destroy Partridge, Swift pretended that that unfortunate man knew what he was talking about; that he really could, as he claimed, foretell the future; and that his gift of prophecy was a firm fact. Swift slew him by making two announcements. The first said that Partridge had predicted his own death. The second said that he had kept his word, and died.

For Partridge, read the British Labour Party. In his book, the thesis of which has already been stated by the author recently in these pages [Encounter, September], Mr. Michael Young treats its policy statements—all of them, from *Labour and the New Social Order* in 1918 to the twelve tables of 1958—very much as Swift treated Partridge's almanacs. He assumes that these promises mean what they say. He assumes, too, that they have all been fulfilled. Then he describes the result in a political apologue that is also a cautionary tale.

The book is dated from 2034 A.D. By that time, the word has become flesh, and Britain has caught up with the perorations. She is now an affluent society, where talent is the only passport to advancement. Worth rises fast, since it is not oppressed any more by poverty or by lack of opportunity. The final conflict has ended, and each stands in his place—the place to which his ability entitles him; for the measurement of intelligence has become an exact science. A new race of Englishmen has been bred by the social mutations that followed the fall-out from the Butler Education Act of 1944 and its successors. Consequently, brains and status go together in close correlation. The new upper classes consist exclusively of people with high I.Q.s—"the five per cent of the population who know what five per cent means." The lower classes are at the bottom because they are mentally inadequate, and for no other reason; their fault is in themselves, not in their stars.

In this society, all the tensions that gave life to British politics from Waterloo to Hiroshima have vanished. The Labour movement, therefore, has stopped moving. For nothing fails like success. Every social problem has been solved—except one. That is: How do you keep these new lower classes happy? They have lost the grievances that gave meaning to their lives; the illusions that enabled them to blame their environment for their inferiority; and the talented men who once were forced, by lack of alternative opportunities, to become their leaders. Bread is plentiful, and so are circuses. . . .

Mr. Young elaborates this theme with fertile wit. In calling his end-of-the-rainbow State a *"meritocracy,"* he has coined a valuable new word. He has also supplied a shibboleth to test the tongue of every aspirant to power in contemporary Britain. At the last general election, I was fortunate enough to hear a Parliamentary candidate ask his audience, "Is it right that babies should starve to death?" He paused to ponder. Then he replied confidently, "No, it is not right." This frank avowal won him applause, as it deserved to do. He could have given the same answer, and got the same response, if he had asked, "Is it right to deny opportunity to anybody?" For the Opportunity State has now become the politicians' equivalent to chastity. All of them are in favour of it, from

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mr. Bevan to Mr. Butler, from Lord Hailsham to the League of Empire Loyalists. They disagree only about the shortest cut.

Undoubtedly, this is what Britain wants—if you can credit her politicians. But the significance of Mr. Young's fable is in its climax. For then his lower classes rise in revolt against Meritocracy.

When you inspect the pieces, you find that the pressures that caused the explosion were present from the start. You see, also, that they would have become lethal at a far earlier stage in reality than they do in Mr. Young's fantasy. For these pressures begin to mount as soon as the first milestones have been passed on the road to Meritocracy.

For all his subtlety and skill, Mr. Young is guilty of a gross over-simplification. To make his fable plausible, he selects only those tendencies in contemporary Britain that tell in his favour, isolates them, then extrapolates them as if they existed in a vacuum. It is rather like supposing that, because a male grows six feet in his first eighteen years, he will be twelve feet tall in middle-age. This is not prophecy; it is sociological sleight-of-hand.

Mr. Young assumes that the British masses—roughly, the ninety-five per cent who do not know what ninety-five per cent means—are hell-bent on creating a society where talent alone counts. True, there are several signs of this, but they are misleading. The masses will clearly vote in favour of giving more scope to talent, but they will do so only because, and to the extent that, they are led to believe that this is in their own interests. For they do not seek a Meritocracy. They want a society that protects and cares for the untalented many.

When you look closely at the ninety-five per cent, you see that there are three great barriers to the attainment of Meritocracy in Britain. Each is formidable. Collectively they are impregnable.

The first is the composition of our electorate. It now contains a high (and a rising) proportion of voters who have outlived their competitive years, people whose prime concern is not emulation but insulation. When you are past sixty-five, as they are, the taste of ginger in the mouth begins to pall. They are social pacifists, against change and struggle; they want to stay as they are.

The second great obstacle is the power of the family unit. Mr. Young recognises, quite rightly, that to achieve Meritocracy you must cripple and paralyse family power. If intelligent parents produce less intelligent children (as they often do), then those children must, in a State where only IQ counts, go to the bottom of the heap. But he assumes, for the purposes of his fable, that there will be no particular difficulty about this—an assumption that is either reckless or naïve. If one fact has been established by uniform experience, it is that you cannot stop men and women from falling in love, and from caring for the products—caring fiercely, irrationally, instinctively, combatively, without reference to equity, or social justice, or even fair shares. When it comes to making decisions about children, every father is an anarchist; and so is every mother. Neither will ever assent to any decline in the status of their children. (This refusal is a private vice, no doubt; but there is public benefit in it, too.)

Mr. Young can study this phenomenon in contemporary Britain simply by turning to his own book, *Family and Kinship in East London*—that back-street Baedeker to the philo-progenitive appetite. He can study it, too, in the common man's bitter hatred (to speak with precision) of the 11-plus examination for admission to grammar schools. The common man recognises, quite rightly, that education based on selection is based on rejection. As a parent he will resist any attempt to make intelligence the test of merit. For the family is the historic fortress of favouritism, the nest of nepotism, the protective shell that guards the dull, the timid, the slow, the non-competitive weakling. Only one sort of society can side-track the family, and free itself from the curse of philo-progenitiveness—a society that is both masculine and celibate. The best example of that in the Western world is the Roman Catholic priesthood, in particular the Society of Jesus. When Loyola created the Jesuits, he founded a "meritocracy" that looks, in many ways, like a preview of Mr. Young's; one where talent is the test for entrance, where it is constantly assessed, where the rule of obedience enables the maximum use to be made of it. But the sanctions that have enabled Loyola and his successors to maintain the Jesuits for four centuries are necessarily absent from this carnal country. If Mr. Young supposes that any such sanctions could be made electorally attractive in Britain, I invite him to contest Bethnal Green on a programme of poverty, obedience, and chastity.

There is a third barrier against meritocracy. Throughout the eight centuries of British history that separated the Norman Conquest from the Industrial Revolution, the "ninety-five per cent" lived in a society that was in essence non-competitive. It provided scope for talent, but it was based on status, not on striving; and status was fixed by inheritance and tradition, rather than achieved as a prize in competitive struggle. The Industrial Revolution destroyed it, and flung the common man naked into the market

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

economy where "merit," measured by the power to survive, was the only law. But the whole of our social history for the past century-and-a-half can be seen, in perspective, as a retreat and not an advance. It is a retreat from contract back to status; from a society dominated by competitive merit and by achievement through acquisition to one where rewards are allotted to all in a caucus race with a prize for every entrant. The common man has fought, ever since the Industrial Revolution, to withdraw from the market economy, to re-establish an England where the ungifted majority can survive and flourish.

For the *summum bonum*, as the ninety-five per cent see it, is a society which provides for them, as well as for the gifted few—in dignity and esteem, as well as in security and consumer goods. The idea of Britain as an arena, with no place in it for anyone except gladiators, where the gifted few are set free to excel, where talent is the only coin—this idea is, I think, utterly and profoundly repugnant to the ninety-five per cent. To achieve their *summum bonum*, they are willing to use other people's weapons as well as their own. During the 19th century, they used the liberal values—free speech, freedom of contract, free trade in ideas. But these were weapons, not targets; instruments, not ends in themselves. To-day, their equivalents are the doctrines of the Opportunity State. The common man uses these doctrines (just as he did the liberal values) in order to protect and enlarge his non-competitive security. But when they become useless for that purpose, he will discard them, as the German masses of the 1930's abandoned the liberal values in exchange for full employment and a paternal economy.

Consequently, the current vogue for the Opportunity State is based very largely on an illusion. The common man is ready to use Mr. Young's five per cent, to let them have their careers open to talent, to echo their catchwords. But this does not mean that he is ready to let them fix the pattern of his life, or to mould the shape of society in their own image. For the gospel of *Vae victis* is no more acceptable to him when it is preached by intellectuals than when it was practised by the tooth-picking entrepreneurs of Victorian Manchester.

Mr. Young's alphas had better not get above themselves. They had better not assume (or lead the politicians to assume) that the ninety-five per cent are panting for a Britain in which individuals and classes are constantly in flux, where social mobility achieves a giddy non-stop velocity, where there is no room and no esteem for the non-competitive or the ungifted or the philo-progenitive, where status goes hand in

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

glove with brains. For if the alphas assume anything of the kind, they will suffer the fate of the coal-owners and the dinosaurs.

In spite of Mr. Young, the lower classes need not start advertising for a Spartacus just yet.

Charles Curran

Poets and Poetry

Selection. A. S. J. Tessimond. *Putnam.* 7s. 6d.

The Dark Houses. By Donald Hall. *The Viking Press.* $3.00.

Selected Poems 1838–1958. By Stanley Kunitz. *Little, Brown & Co.* $3.75.

Third Day Lucky. By Robin Skelton. *Oxford University Press.* 7s. 6d.

A Sense of the World. By Elizabeth Jennings. *André Deutsch.* 10s. 6d.

The Late Augustans. Edited and Introduced by Donald Davie. *Heinemann.* 8s. 6d.

What exactly are the meanings we attach to the words "poetry," "verse," "prose"? Where does each begin, and the others end, and where do they overlap? And does it matter anyway? These questions—of which the last is actually by far the most serious and the most difficult to answer—seem to be posed by all the volumes before me (with the possible exception of Mr. Skelton's). At school one was probably taught that poetry and verse were *not* synonymous, and that poetry could also be written in prose. This is a perfectly respectable idea, and goes back, in fact, to Aristotle, *via* the Renaissance. By "poetry," in fact, Aristotle simply seems to have meant "imaginative literature," only in his day nearly all of it happened to have been written in verse. He classed the only piece of prose fiction he seems to have known, Xenophon's *Cyropædia*, as an epic poem, thus, as Dr. Tillyard has pointed out, considerably confusing the issue for later critics of the Epic. But the French, and even more so the Germans (with whom a *Dichter* can be a novelist or a realistic prose dramatist, just as much as what we usually call here a poet), have been, in practice, a good deal more consistent in sticking to this tradition than have the English. We do talk about "poetic prose," but we mean a kind of emotional rhetoric, however delicate—Burke, say, or De Quincey, or Sir Thomas Browne, or Virginia Woolf. That would have been all right in the days when one could, with Matthew Arnold, write Pope and Dryden off as no more than "classics of our prose." But to-day we are agreed that there can be poetry, even great poetry, which is predominantly, if not primarily, intellectual in character. But if intellectual verse, making use of a deliberate emotional understatement, can be poetry (and of course it can), why should only the more emotive forms of prose qualify for this description?

The problem has been complicated by the invention of "free verse." As far as English is concerned, this was largely an American invention. It seems to have arisen from the necessity for the American poet to free himself from rhythmical forms which were inextricably bound up with speech-forms, and thus of thought-forms, which were essentially of the Old World. That it was justified may, I think, be substantiated if one considers the far greater maturity of contemporary American poetry compared with that of Canada or Australia, which has not really made this effort. Now in the days when the quarrel between "traditional" and "free" verse was a living issue, it was a favourite trick of critics of the former school to take a piece of their opponents' verse and print it as prose, to demonstrate that it really was prose. Of course it was, *if* you printed it that way. But print it as verse, so that particular importance is given to words at the beginning and end of the line, so that a special style of reading is encouraged, with emphasis on pauses and *nuances* of meaning and rhythm, and throwing into relief any sound-links between the words—by rhyme, assonance, and alliteration—what then? Surely a wholly new approach to the words is aroused, an approach not wholly rational. Because the typography leads us to expect poetry, and not prose, it will be poetry, if the poet has done his job properly.

But one can still be a poet and write wholly traditional verse. Mr. Tessimond does this, and what excellent verse too, and how moving! The title of one of his earlier volumes, *Voices in a Giant City*, suggested the "social realism" of the 'thirties, but Mr. Tessimond is not really like that. His closest affinity is, I think, with Mr. Betjeman, though he is, indeed, more metropolitan. He is a poet of amused observation, and of sad, but not tragically, frustrated love. His "A Man of Culture" is the one piece of satire written by a contemporary in Popean couplets which is not simply pastiche. His eye is always on the object, and his lyrics (which show the influence of Housman) are, within limits, perfect in tone:

Are you sad to think how often
You have let all wisdom go
For a crimson mouth and rounded
Thighs and eyes you drowned in? "No."

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Do you find this level country,
Where the winds more gently blow,
Better than the summit raptures
And the deep-sea sorrows? "No."

This is minor poetry; perhaps it is merely "verse." But it is also frighteningly difficult to do so well, and I think will be remembered when a great deal more pretentious work of our time has been forgotten.

MR. HALL is an American, and a considerably younger man. This is his second volume of poems, and he seems to be undecided whether to try and develop into a "serious" poet with metaphysical pretentions, or turn out to be something like an American equivalent to Mr. Tessimond. His metaphysical essays are not contemptible, not by any means—but I hope he will not take it amiss if I suggest that the second course might in the end turn out to be the right one. For he is lyrical, technically accomplished and civilised, with that beautiful New England civilisation which makes us aware what a nation of shopkeepers and clodhoppers we are. The world he observes is largely that of the American small town and genteel suburb, and this he does with humanity and humour and also (this is part of his civilisation) an awareness of death.

Mr. Kunitz is another American poet, who appears to be somewhat neglected. But he has received high praise from some of his fellows, including Mr. Robert Lowell, Mr. Richard Wilbur, and Mr. Theodore Roethke. He appears to stand closest to the last of these. He seems to me a somewhat unequal poet, rather humourless, occasionally a little heavily over-romantic in diction. But no American, I suppose, is capable of the excesses of some of our own practitioners (or should I say late practitioners?) in this vein. His poems also occasionally verge on what appears to be a particularly American affliction—a sort of doodling with words and images, from which a minimal metaphysical point, may, if one is lucky, eventually emerge.

Mr. Skelton is a young poet of great promise. He seems to be working towards some kind of synthesis between the recently fashionable, and not wholly unjustified, emphasis on the virtues of irony and ambiguity, and a vein of native, lyrical romanticism. The title poem is a short religious lyric, the "third day," being that of the Resurrection. It is a healthy sign, I think, that the Christian mystery can now be approached with such an air of fresh, unselfconscious gaiety:

Third day lucky
He split the stone
With his thread of grass,
And shouting came
into his Easter,

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the carved word split,
open to sun
And the drilling rain,
. . . . . .
and love nailed down,
and from the crack
in the temple stone
the new grass springs,
the dead word snapped,
blood on the jacket
of the bone.

Miss Jennings's work has received so much praise from those whose judgment one must respect, that one hesitates to dissent. One recognises the sensibility and the intelligence, but there is a curiously muted quality about her poetry. It is as if one was listening to someone murmuring to themselves in their sleep. Granted that this is, in Mr. Eliot's phrase, essentially poetry overheard rather than heard, yet one longs for her to wake up and speak out. Her technique does not seem to help. Her rhythms are generally flatly iambic, and blank verse or rather unambitious stanza forms predominate. This leads her, too often, into a weak, meandering syntax, which the discipline of either more adventurous, or stricter verse forms, or indeed of prose, might mitigate. Furthermore, it is time it was said that the scrupulous adherence to the prose order of the words (which has become almost *de rigueur* for poets to-day) can lead to results as awkward, if you're not careful, as the clumsy use of inversions. For if a pronoun is separated from its verb or an adjective or a preposition from its following substantive by the break at the end of the line, it requires some very special emphasis of meaning not to give the effect of a stutter. This is the kind of thing I mean:

Yet there was
Such distance between words and what they spoke
About, the marvels would not stand but broke
Away.

It is curious to find Miss Jennings translating Claudel, of all people, and making quite a good job of it too. Her own exercise in a kind of Claudelian prose poetry at the end of the book, "Teresa of Avila," is quite unlike any of her other poems, and seems to me much better. It suggests that her talent may one day take a new and fruitful turn, though perhaps this may be in the direction of prose rather than of (what then *is* the opposite?) verse or poetry.

Finally comes Dr. Davie with an anthology of poetry from the late 18th century. That was the age when poets made no bones about treating prosaic matter, though in the strictest of forms and in a special diction. Yet this convention can still furnish a great deal of pleasure. Dr. Davie's introduction and notes are admirable. It is only a pity that his choice of poems (nine longish pieces from Shenstone to the early Wordsworth) is rather unadventurous. Most of them are available in other anthologies (Langhorne's interesting *The Country Justice*, given only in part, is an exception). There is a great deal of minor verse of this period which deserves to be better known.

John Heath-Stubbs

The Light Touch

The Aunt's Story. By PATRICK WHITE. *Eyre and Spottiswoode.* 16s.

Breakfast at Tiffany's. By TRUMAN CAPOTE. *Hamish Hamilton.* 12s. 6d.

The Go-Away Bird. By MURIEL SPARK. *Macmillan.* 13s. 6d.

Solitaire. By KAY DICK. *Heinemann.* 13s. 6d.

West End People. By PETER WILDEBLOOD. *Weidenfeld and Nicolson.* 13s. 6d.

The Young Devils. By JOHN TOWNSEND. *Chatto and Windus.* 15s.

ALL these books are written with a light touch: just the thing for post-Christmas hang-overs and midwinter gloom. The most ambitious is *The Aunt's Story*, an early novel by the author of *Voss*. It is the story of an "unfulfilled" life. Theodora Goodman is "at least an aunt," and at most a sort of saint *manqué*, understanding all, forgiving all, but not giving or taking anything herself. She grows up in Australia. After the marriage of her pretty, silly, ordinary sister, and the deaths of her bookish, unsuccessful father and her conventional, dissatisfied mother, Theodora, now free (but for what?) goes off to the Mediterranean, where she meets some crazy characters in her *pension* who seem to have strayed out of European literature. This middle section is in marked contrast with the realism of the opening scenes in Australia: the ball, where the local men become "strong and important with drink"; the death scenes; the episode of Pearl Brawne, a servant who had to leave in a hurry. Of course, the whole novel is meant to be the description of the disintegration of a personality, the gradual failure of Theodora's hold on a reality in which there were no direct relationships.

If I could put out my hand, she said, but I cannot. . . .
There is no lifeline to other lives.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This, the keynote of the book, comes at the end of the first section. From then on, the end is inevitable; and there was for me something slightly artificial, almost literary, in the rather—shall we say untethered?—fragmentation scenes in the *pension*. This of course was precisely the effect intended. No subject is harder to write about than madness; the writer is bound to lean heavily on literary technique for his effects. Mr. White's technique, mind you, is quite brilliant. He has wit and touches of wild poetic insight and many striking words and phrases which gave me great æsthetic pleasure. But the book might have been more powerful if it had been shorter, say of *nouvelle* length. Nevertheless, one must admire the skill with which Mr. White conveys Theodora's strange, fatal acceptance of everything: the novel might have been called "Herself Unsurprised." And the book is never morbid: on the contrary, there is a curious lightness, almost a sense of happiness and relief, as we reach and pass the point where nothing matters.

Miss Holiday Golightly, the onomatopoeically-named heroine of Truman Capote's *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (a *nouvelle*) is as positive as poor Miss Goodman was negative: a wild waif on the loose in New York at a time when the author, who tells the story, was an unpublished writer; their relationship, half teasing, half tender, is strongly reminiscent—as everyone has by now pointed out—of Sally Bowles and Christopher Isherwood. Holly seems more interesting and more intelligent, but that may be just because she talks in a more up-to-date language about retaining her identity in a corrupt world: "I want still to be me when I wake up one fine morning and have breakfast at Tiffany's." And the ending is an echo, too, of that other famous poignant disappearing trick. But it's all very charming and freshly done; Mr. Capote writes like an angel and can get away with anything, even the rest of the relaxation-pieces which make up this book, in which atmosphere, preciousness, and sentimentality are just about controlled.

The Go-Away Bird is also a collection of short stories including a longer title-piece. Miss Spark moves with skill between fantasy and reality, though at times her fantasy, like Mr. Capote's, gets perilously close to whimsy: only in her case it is healthy English whimsy. The story about the flying saucers, for instance, reads rather like the script for a B.B.C. Saturday matinée. But the realism is better: "You Should Have Seen the Mess," for instance, presents life as seen through the eyes of a cosy hygiene-and-telly-bred teenager, the sort of girl who knows all about the new blue whitener. It is a first-person story, and Miss Spark seems to have the pre-packaged mentality and the awful genteel vocabulary accurately taped. The title story is also well done. Here Miss Spark beautifully holds together her eye and ear for contemporary foibles and her sense of the strange and the sad, to produce a study of wasted innocence, of Africa versus England. This is the least-thin story in the book, and the one in which fancy yields to a deeper insight.

Solitaire is a curious novel: it has a certain distinction, though of a somewhat self-conscious kind. The blurb says it is a novel about how a novel gets written, which raised in me hopes, quite unfounded, of another *Faux-Monnayeurs*. It is told in the first person by the author, a woman journalist who goes to Paris to get in touch with the French ex-husband and grown-up son of her friend Anne, who has re-married and is now a successful architect. Though the original motivation seemed inadequate, the idea or what followed was interesting: the relationship between Anne and her son François: hitherto they have not known each other, which meant a gap in their personalities. But I got the impression that the idea failed to interest Miss Dick as much as it might have done. She seemed to play around with it rather, and to be more

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

concerned with incidentals than with her story or her characters. One has admittedly to remember the title: ultimately isolation and its self-knowledge may be all, but the effect here seemed to me out of focus. The actual writing is oddly blurred, as if neither the central theme nor the construction were important enough to carry the author along. I think this might have been a better novel if Miss Dick had made up her mind to concentrate either on experiment or conviction.

There's not much to say about *West End People* except that it's an enjoyable frolic. Personally I like frolics and wish we had more of them. Mr. Wildeblood's Soho gangsters and prostitutes all have hearts of gold like people in old-fashioned musicals: indeed I expected them to burst into song at any moment (to music by Julian Slade?). The whole thing has gaiety and enough pace to keep one turning the pages over non-stop. But don't expect either documentary or satire beyond the very gentlest sort.

As this is a quiet month for publishing, one might throw in *The Young Devils*, though it's not fiction but documentary: just the names changed. It's another foray into the blackboard jungle of London secondary modern schools: weak headmasters, staff constantly leaving or threatening to leave (and who can blame them?), buildings like prisons or asylums. I myself once taught for a month in a secondary modern, for what is laughingly called experience and, even more laughingly, money. Although nothing quite so awful happened to me as the things that happened to Mr. Townsend, I certainly feel they might have done had I stayed longer. As long as we have slums and depressed areas, we can hardly expect the schools in those areas to be shining exceptions and models of enlightenment: they are bound to conform to their environment. All this is, of course, heartbreaking for the teacher, and probably a book like this, which draws attention to the sort of thing that goes on, will do no harm. But one wonders if it will do much good. Since the main problems are social and economic (not to say moral) and not just pedagogic, it's hard to see what can be done, short of an institutional revolution. But Mr. Townsend points to certain things within the educational set-up itself which could presumably be reformed: the gap, for instance, between the educational theorist administrating in a comfortable office, and the teacher struggling in the classroom. But one's experience is that literature must have a pretty violent impact before it produces any changes; and one wonders whether a more exaggerated, fictional account might not be more effective at a time when, to quote from the Nuffield Foundation's report on television, "fiction makes a deeper impact on children than reality." And not just on children. Perhaps the State schools are ready for their *Nicholas Nickleby*.

K. W. Gransden

Fiddler of Our Time

A Painter of Our Time. By John Berger. *Secker and Warburg*. 18s.

The Painter of Our Time, as Mr. Berger sees him, is an unorthodox though unrepenting believer in Soviet Communism like himself. He is a Hungarian, some two or three years older than our century. He escaped from his country after the White Terror (following the Soviet experiment in 1919) and has lived in Western capitals ever since. He is a searcher for truth and for success; quite understandably, he cannot separate the two. "It is not the creation of a painting which constitutes an event," he says. "The event is the way it is welcomed by others." His state of mind is a mixture of hopes, adventures, and frustration. His basic attitude is that of a facetious, or an embittered, protest against the world of shopkeepers and exploiters in which he has to live. But has he? Why not live in Moscow? János Lavin, John Berger's hero, does put this question to himself. "The reason behind my decision [to come to the West] now seems not only naïve but ironic. I wanted to go where I would still have to fight for Socialism. I did not want to enjoy the victory that others had fought for." Of course, however, on these grounds it would have been more heroic still to stay in Horthy's Hungary.

And János Lavin does believe in heroism. His main grievance against capitalist society turns out to be that it fails to produce heroes as patrons. "Artists . . . paint for heroes," and in our "period of transition" he looks for them in vain, save of course in the U.S.S.R., which for him is too good to be enjoyed.

The type thus represented is real. I knew him well, and in many places: according to changing opportunities offered by changing governments, in Berlin's Romanisches Café, in Vienna's Museum Kaffee, in the Café Dôme in Paris, and possibly even in London studios where Mr. Berger encountered him or his shadow. Needless to say that not all the characteristics of such men could be fitted in one pattern. What they had in common was their contempt for the Albert Memorial (and all Albert Memorials of the world), a contempt which was expanded into

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

philosophy and theology. Solemn splendour and bourgeois respectability were the things which had to be defied at all costs and in all spheres, on the canvas as well as in the ballot box. János Lavin from time to time refers to "starving proletarians." So did my friends of whom he reminds me. None of them dwelt on the subject longer than was necessary to denounce those who ate well and all the same bought bad pictures. What about those who, like Sir Gerald in *A Painter of Our Time*, bought good ones? They were condemned for lack of heroism. The starving millions were expected to rise on behalf of the self-tormented painters of our time and to establish a new world of abstract artistic shapes and abstract social justice.

This, at any rate, was how they felt in the early 'twenties. Then they split. Some mellowed into commercialism, and forgot about the whole thing. I knew a number who, mellowed or not, were glad after the Soviet victory to return to Hungary, and, at last at home, some suffered disappointment, others became realistic. They painted in the Albert Memorial style, only substituting Hammers and Sickles for Angels' wings and Royal crowns. The realist of our time was the Socialist Realist.

János Lavin is quite different. I do not mean to say that therefore he could not have existed; only that the author has not given him a real existence. His method is that of editing his hero's diary which contains random notes on the mood of his wife, on the contrasts of colour in pictures, on the news of a comrade's execution in 1952 and his rehabilitation in 1956. The story ends with Lavin's sudden return to Hungary on the eve of the revolutionary events. We can only guess what may have happened to him. The author hopes "that János, if he is alive now, supports Kádár." Surely it is not this hope, expressed on the last page, which makes the preceding 237 pages so tedious. It is the incoherence of visions and episodes recorded in the diary. They reflect a curious mind, well-versed in ancient and modern art, intelligent, witty, and too honest to lie but too chaotic to take stock of the contradictions of his own experience, mixing trivialities with metaphysics, and all in the literary hope of realising truth in character and fullness in thought. Where it fails it helps itself by making a political declaration.

Such politics ought not to be taken too seriously. But in Mr. Berger's book they are unfortunately expressed too obtrusively to be ignored. What is the real purpose they serve? It is the author's incurable honesty which gives it all away. "My politics is a lightning conductor," his János Lavin writes. Millions may perish but he wants his lightning to be conducted. A psychologist might condone; a believer in *Her-*

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

renmensch morality could approve. But how can he approve of himself? His longings are humanitarian. "The greatest violinist," he writes, "cannot be justified in playing his violin on the bank of a river in which a drowning man is shouting for help." If only fiddling were rejected on behalf of life-saving! But his Marxist-Leninist fervour inspires him only to more posturing along the shore: "The modern artist fights to contribute to human happiness, truth, or justice. He works to improve the world...." What this apparently means is only more bolts of political lightning being thrown, with the æsthetic joy of a Nietzsche or D'Annunzio (or even Nero), down on the heads of unsuspecting fellow-creatures.

Paul Ignotus

ENCOUNTER IN 1958

•

Colin Welch
'DEAR LITTLE NODDY' [*January*]

Malcolm Muggeridge
MANY WINTERS AGO IN MOSCOW [*March*]

J. H. Hexter
STORM OVER THE GENTRY [*May*]

Charles Curran
PRIVILEGE IN JOURNALISM [*July*]

Lionel Trilling
"LOLITA" [*October*]

Daniel Bell
AMERICA'S PECULIAR RECESSION [*Nov.*]

Stuart Hampshire
"Dr. Zhivago" [*November*]

Dan Jacobson
AFTER NOTTING HILL [*December*]

•

3s. 6d. (75 cents) each issue including postage

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FROM A DIARY

A GAME I often play is imagining works which I might write if I were another person or in a different situation. It is a dangerous game because, indulged in too much, it leads to all one's work remaining hypothetical—if I were on the point of death, if I were in love, if I were a great historian, if I were Einstein... I would write such and such. Yeats develops this game to the point where he writes poems with titles such as *"He wishes his beloved were dead,"* writing the poem that he thinks he would have written if she were dead.

One such work goes through my mind so often, that I would like to put it in the mind of some contemporary who is a political thinker with a mind at least as analytic, and a knowledge at least as encyclopædic, as Karl Marx.

It has various possible titles, for example, *The Devolution of Power*, *The Dismantling of Politics*, or *Counter-Marx*. Possibly all these titles are too forbidding, and it should have something allegoric like Hobbes with his *Leviathan*.

Anyway, for some young man who wishes to devote his life to writing the revolutionary—or perhaps the counter-revolutionary—work of the century, here might be his outline:

Part One: This shows (I do not know how far it is true, but the writer's research would certainly prove it so!) that before the Industrial Revolution, there was a separation of political from other kinds of power. The political leaders of an international ruling class could agree, not just because they were representative of that class, but because every source of power had not been conscripted into politics.

Part Two would show that owing to the fact that in the 19th century the Industrial Revolution was achieved by capitalism, there was an increasing conscription of politics into the interests of the new capitalist class.

Part Three would show how the revolutionary significance of Marx lay in his interpreting *all* the activating forces within society—economic, cultural, or spiritual—in terms of a simplified *for-us-or-against-us* political struggle of class against class. Marx was above all a dynamic observer who affected the nature of the phenomena he observed. He made the opponents of capitalism aware of the activity of the capitalist enemy on fronts so secret that they themselves were scarcely aware of them. More than this, he made every revolutionary conscious of his carrying a secret counter-revolutionary inside him. He intensified the class struggle by dividing capitalists into three groups: those who became more aware of their methods and motives and therefore more consciously "wicked"; those (the liberals) who gradually disqualified themselves from partaking in the struggle through their insistent self-stultifying innocence of its nature; those whose consciousness changed into a guilty conscience (the Men of Good-will).

Part Four: The long-term effect of Marxism was to give political significance to human activities which in previous centuries had been outside politics. (The writer of my hypothetical work would have to criticise extensively "retrospective" Marxism—that is, the Marxist practice of interpreting past cultural and religious history into the class terms of 19th- and 20th-century history, thus locking the whole of human development within the prison of a modern political conflict of ideologies.)

In the 20th century, all individual interests, all mental activities, could be interpreted as "social." There remained no thought, no aspiration, no art, that could not be interpreted as positive or negative activity, on one side or the other, in the *for-us-or-against-us* struggle of ideologies.

An obvious result of this was totalitarianism, which is simply one side calling the other's bluff: throwing off the mask of a kind of concealed politics in which men are allowed to pursue the diverse aims of opposing activities in an atmosphere of suspended war or restless truce, the left hand tolerating what the right hand doeth. With totalitarianism, everyone is ordered to have two right or two left hands.

PART FIVE would show that although totalitarianism is perhaps outmoded, total politics are still with us. By this I mean that in any confrontation of powers having opposed ideologies, the sum of all the now politically conscious resources of each country make up the total of forces thrown in on each side. These forces include science and culture as well as previous "politics." In the past, when statesmen met, they could—if both sides wished to do so—agree, because the area of differences which they had to discuss was limited to what was supposed to be the fairly limited area of politics. To-day, if Khrushchev and Dulles should meet, beyond the area of restricted old-style "politics"—which they might agree about—is a whole sum of differing philosophy, economic theory, science, belief—even literature and art—all become part of their political consciousness, which they could never agree about. This is so marked that all agreements between East and West are agreements to differ. Anyone who dreams of any other kind of agreement is known to be a deceiver or a self-deceiver. That Roosevelt thought he could come to some kind of agree-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ment with Stalin, only shows the measure of self-deception and vanity in which his kind of power had involved him. As a philosopher put it to me once: All we can hope for to-day is a *modus non vivendi*.

Part Six would argue that hope for the future lay in the dismantling of total politics, the unwinding of Marx's skein intertwining all activities into one or the other of two political sides, back into separate strands again. Science, philosophy, belief, and the arts, should be depoliticised so that scientists, philosophers, the religious, and the writers and artists should not find—as they do to-day—when they meet, that they represent branches of political ideology laid down by Marxism and—its antidote—counter-Marxism. This means that a critical analysis of scientific and cultural activities, with the aim of deliberately separating them from ideology, is necessary. Certain interests—such as "raising the standard of living of backward peoples"—will be seen to be so universal that if they were carried out they would abolish the frontiers of ideology. Certain intellectual pursuits—scientific and creative—transcend current political thinking. Commerce is bound to be allied with politics, but at a great many points it frets at political restrictions and is inhibited by ideology.

Part Seven would acknowledge a debt to H. G. Wells' prophecy of airmen who, from their technically superior and supra-terrestrial viewpoint, form an international of technicians to overthrow existing politics. In it, my hypothetical writer would discern a parable for the scientists from East and West who met recently in Geneva to discuss the possibilities of abandoning atom tests; and for the Assembly of the United Nations, which might, like democratic parliaments, become a meeting with a spirit of its own, gradually becoming independent of the governments it represents; and still more perhaps those specialised agencies of the United Nations whose experts might all come to respect the world tasks of curing, feeding, and teaching which are their expertise, more than the killing, starving, and propaganding total politics they represent. All the same, my author would not be optimistic. He would recognise that the total politicisation of classes which began with Marx, has been successful in causing revolutions only at the cost of precipitating fearful reactions, and of throwing all human activities on to the battlefield of irreconcilable ideological struggles....

In three volumes, price 25s. per volume.

*

THE above is a sketch of a hypothetical study by a hypothetical author on the subject of the dismantling of total politics. It seems strange to me that I should carry round in my head ideas for books by other people. It is not so surprising though, when one reflects that the climate of a time is full of ideas which can acquire the status even of generally shared convictions, without anyone stating them succinctly. There is, surely, a current conviction that truth, and the search for it, have disappeared in large parts of the globe, and that they might disappear altogether everywhere.

All who fear that truth may perish, should read *Back to Life* (Hutchinson), a remarkable anthology of translations of poems written behind the Iron Curtain since the Twentieth Party Congress, and prefaced with a knowledgeable and perceptive introduction by Robert Conquest, a young poet better informed politically than were most of the poets of the 'thirties.

These poets have one subject—the anguish of Truth under tyranny; one excitement—the joy of Truth suddenly released. There are, however, vintages of release and oppression. The Russian poets, after Stalinism, obviously identify their country with Communism. To them, the Twentieth Party Congress is a stage within the whole development of the Communist State which they accept. Yet they do feel that during the years after Lenin's death injustices were committed, liars, hypocrites, and torturers triumphed, and things went badly wrong. Only *Unfinished Song*, by Harijs Heislers (of which some excerpts are translated), seems to strike a note of pessimism unrelieved by the bursts of Leninist optimism which Stalin's death excites in the other poets. But the tragedy nevertheless remains personal, for the poem tells of a family life utterly broken by tyranny.

The Polish, Hungarian, and even the Czech poems remain European in spirit. That is to say, they are the poems of those who belong to the European tradition and who experience Communism as a kind of Occupation, like that of France by the Nazis. Indeed these poets are in a direct line with a style of writing which began during the Spanish Civil War, and continued through the Resistance, and which now flourishes, particularly in Poland. We contemporary spectators are so strongly impressed by the different phases and attitudes of the politics involved that we fail to see that the poetry being written in Eastern Europe to-day will probably be regarded by literary historians of the future as a single alternative tradition (irrespective of ideologies) to the highly intellectualised poetry of America and England—entrenched to-day in the universities and surrounded with a barrage of exclusive literary criticism.

The characteristics of the alternative tradition—in the poetry of Miguel Hernández, Alberti, Neruda, Aragon, Wazyk, and Illyés—are a passionate individualism identified with

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

an equally passionate social sense of communion with other oppressed, insulted, imprisoned individuals. This poetry—which is essentially that of a crushed and hounded opposition—differs from the unctuous hypocritical conformism of social realism, and also from the icy, contemptuous superiority of current American and English academic poetry. It meets the West where poets have, in the past generation, shown a despairing consciousness of social breakdown. *The Waste Land* is saluted and is an influence (obviously, for example, in Adam Wazyk's *Poem for Adults*) but nothing else of Eliot. Surrealism is a decided influence, partly because it is individualist and yet permeated with despairing social consciousness, partly because it offers a whole dictionary of images which provides a secret code for poetic "messages": a code that probably seems pretty opaque to those who do not understand poetry, but which is clear enough to those who do.

Stylistically, the poetry of those who to-day oppose Communism is very close to the poetry of a Communist opposition in the 1930's and 1940's. Anyone familiar with Paul Eluard's famous poem on Liberty, written during the German occupation of France, will recognise its influence on Gyula Illyés' *One Sentence of Tyranny*:

there's tyranny . . .
in the way suddenly
your lover's face becomes frozen
because tyranny is there
in the amorous trysts,

not only in the questioning,
it is there in the declaration of love,
in the sweet drunkenness of words,
like a fly in the wine.

Eluard was a Communist, and Illyés is writing about living under the results of Communism. One should not be put off too much by the apparent contradiction. For—apart from the labels the poets attach to themselves—Illyés is writing about the situation of living under tyranny just as Eluard was doing in 1943.

THE labels are indeed misleading. Most of the poets in *Back to Life* were at one time—and some still are—Communists. What is more important than their self-labellings is that all write poems which have the despairing yet authentic quality of desperate messages scrawled on prison walls. Their language fuses the darkness of the cell with the whiteness of shut-out longed-for light. In their poetry, contemporary history has become legendary, and one reads references to the Party or the AVH—to Huesca, Madrid, Vienna—without embarrassment. They take their place as though they belonged to some remote historic time: one might be reading references to a prince, a city, a battle, a scholar, in a translation of a Chinese poem by Arthur Waley.

In the West, we adopt a sympathetic air to the poetry of victims. We regard it, more or less, as an episode—the result of the poor poets living in such wretched circumstances—while we continue to write our own kind of poetry which we hope (if it is heavily vested in references, influences, and myths) will ravish future generations, prepared (we assume) to spend days looking up our references, influences, and myths. The literature of the French Resistance is to-day forgotten.

Yet I wonder whether our assumption that intense intellectual effort is a way of raping the Muse is quite justified. It might be that in a hundred years' time, readers, looking back at our turbulent history, will find in the poignant lyric cry of *Back to Life* some quality of immediacy which we find in troubadour poetry, or in the lyrics of Elizabethan soldiers and prisoners, like Raleigh and Wyatt. It will seem the poetry of this epoch endured: and the academic poetry from university poets will resemble that of aristocrats and monks. Perhaps. It is shocking to say so, but I feel a kind of envy for the poetry written to-day in Eastern Europe—although, of course, I cannot judge it in translation.

More than twenty years ago in Madrid I was haunted by lines of a young poet, Miguel Hernández, which have the same desperate, accusing tone. I translated them roughly then:

Here I have a voice impassioned,
Here I have a life disputed and indignant,
Here I have a message, here I have a life.

Aquí tengo una voz enardecida,
Aquí tengo una vida combatida y airada,
Aquí tengo un rumor, aquí tengo una vida.

Stephen Spender

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FROM THE OTHER SHORE

Pasternak, Camus, and Surroundings

WHEN Boris Pasternak sent his "voluntary statement" to the editors of *Pravda* (November 6th, 1958) it seemed that he bought a truce at a price. He ended it with words which made it rather clear what his true feelings were:

> It is hardly necessary for me to assure you that nobody has forced me to do anything and that I am making this statement of my own free-will, with a bright faith in the future, proud of the times in which I live, and of the people who surround me.

It was not long before this bitter touch had found its ironic confirmation. At the First Congress of the RSFSR Writers' Union, in December, its chairman, L. S. Sobolev, observed:

> Pasternak is a worthy heir of this decadent *intelligentsia* which was held in such contempt by the best representative of the genuine Russian *intelligentsia*, Lenin, and which was so hated also by Chekhov, a real Russian *intellectual* to the very marrow....

At the same time came the attack on Pasternak by Sergey Smirnov in the magazine *Agitator* (No. 22, 1958). The magazine is published by the *Agitprop* department of the Party's Central Committee for the benefit of more than 300,000 "agitators," who are supposed to expound its content at lectures all over the country. This is what the participants at such meetings hear about the poet and the book they have no chance to read:

> We have had no poet who was more distant from the people than B. Pasternak, an æstheticising poet, whose writings preserved the rotten, pre-revolutionary decadence. A narrow circle of readers has been the lot of the poet, and he was surrounded by a narrow circle of friends in the literary milieu. It was this narrow circle of friends who gradually built the "legend" about Pasternak....
>
> Now this legend has been destroyed and buried by Pasternak himself. The novel, *Doctor Zhivago*, on which Pasternak had been working for many years is permeated throughout by the anti-Soviet spirit.... It is weak artistically... and the whole system of beliefs of the heroes of the novel has nothing to do with our Soviet pattern of thought and life.... The basic principle of our life, collectivism, is referred to in the book by the disdainful term of "herd instinct."... The main heroes of the book, mostly beloved by the author, frankly and shamefacedly propagate the philosophy of treason. The idea is expounded, black on white, in the book, that for a "genuine" thinker and artist treason is quite natural, that a talented intellectual-individualist can and has a moral right to pass from one camp to another, as an "extra-ordinary herd-less" being. What appears to an ordinary man as treason is glorified by Pasternak.... Thus the novel, *Doctor Zhivago*, is an apologia for treason.... Pasternak sold his manuscript abroad, to the Italian publisher, Feltrinelli, a renegade who has been excluded from the Italian Communist Party, who passed from the camp of progress to the camp of reaction.... By this deed, the man who was always an internal emigré has finally unmasked himself. The circle of his treacherous activities has closed.... Last year the Nobel Prize for Literature was given to the fascistic French writer, Camus, who is little known in France, and who morally represents a personality with whom no decent French writer will shake hands. This same Camus has now sent a friendly telegram to Pasternak.
>
> This sad experience can teach us a lesson. In the first place it destroys completely notions about the possibility of an a-political literature. There cannot be any "pure art." There are only two sides of the barricades; there is no third side.... Pasternak became a political weapon in the hands of imperialist reaction. *Doctor Zhivago* reflected the hatred of the capitalist world for the October revolution, the wicked opinions of our enemies. Any defence of such views puts a writer on the other side of the barricade.

From this shore comes the news that some Hollywood groups are in negotiation for the production of a film based on the Pasternak novel.

There is apparently no end to the martyrdom of Doctor Zhivago.

*

Kolakowski's "Principle of Inconsistency"

FACING the problem of ideological fanaticism, the young Polish revisionist philosopher, Leszek Kolakowski, has written an elegant and moving plea, *In Praise of Inconsistency* (*Tworczosc*, No. 9, 1958):

> What does the state require from its citizens? It requires consistency in devotion to state or régime. A consistent citizen will always collaborate proudly with the secret police, knowing well that it is a necessary factor of the State's existence, its development, and its splendour. This is so easy to prove, and any citizen who would hesitate to write denunciations for the secret police is most certainly an inconsistent citizen....
>
> In other words, complete consistency is identical with practical fanaticism, and inconsistency is a source of tolerance. By what right may somebody, who is absolutely convinced of the exclusive truth of all his beliefs, indulge freely in tolerance for different beliefs? What good or value can he expect from a situation in which one is allowed to propagate with impunity beliefs which are doubtlessly false and, therefore, in one way or another socially harmful? In the name of

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

what can he abstain from means to an end which he regards as right? . . .

Convictions about an absolute and exclusive superiority of certain values to which all other things are subordinated must, when universally applied and practised, turn the human world into a battlefield, and this, indeed, happens from time to time. Lack of consistency prevents such an outcome. Inconsistency, as an individual human attitude, is simply a conscious reserve of uncertainty, a permanent awareness of the possibility of error, one's own, one's opponent's. . . .

*

Teahouse of August Moonshine

THE ORGAN of the Bulgarian Fatherland Front, *Otechestven Front* (October 18th, 1958), in an article "Against Fascination," criticises some Western plays which were favourably received by Bulgarian audiences:

> Our socialist theatre shows a great interest in the works of progressive playwrights of non-socialist countries. The picture of the decaying class society, presented artistically, educates our audiences and keeps up its hatred of the supporters of this inhuman order.
>
> But not all plays selected by the Theatre Collectives in our country deal adequately with this serious problem.
>
> We must try to be clear about one question: authors in capitalist countries do not have any opportunity to express openly and directly their negative attitude towards the existing order. We cannot require too much from them. They are often compelled to use Aesopian language, searching for adequate aphorisms and elaborate metaphors in order to get their thoughts through the censorship. For us these thoughts are important, but they are not always well recognised by some enthusiastic theatres.
>
> A vivid example of such misapprehension is furnished by John Patrick's play, *The Teahouse of the August Moon*. It is difficult to see the progressive value of this play. There may be a first impression that the author is criticising the stultifying influence of the American Army, exerting colonial pressure on an Eastern state. But soon we see that the American colonialists and the natives come to a full understanding, agreeing to share the local alcoholic drinks and the Teahouse with the pretty geishas. Captain Fisbey is well-disposed towards the subjugated population and a model of conciliation. One can almost believe that there are American officers who are not animated by the oppressive spirit of their commanders. The way Patrick describes the exploited Okinawa people can be only called calumniatory. They are depicted as uncultured and lazy, accepting their slavery voluntarily so long as they are supplied with alcohol and women for pleasure. The colonialists can hardly wish to add anything to this picture from which a real racial arrogance emerges. . . .

Apparently the theatre audiences do not quite see it that way. The *Fatherland Front* makes this final appeal:

> The managing directors of our theatres should not be guided by monetary considerations, but solely by the interests of true Communist education of our people. . . .

*

Thousands of Newtons and Einsteins

EARLY in 1958 the Chinese Communist Party called on writers to "make a big leap forward in literary work." On March 7th the Union of Chinese Writers issued a letter entitled "Writers, Make Big Forward Leaps!" urging them to increase literary production:

> In the big-leap-forward movement everyone must subject himself to collective supervision and encouragement. In doing so, everyone will be able to do more work more successfully. Just as we are eager to know how many million tons of steel our country will produce this year, the people want to know how much we writers will turn out this year. We may not like figures, but they are exactly what is needed in the course of the big socialist leaps. If 10,000 writers planned to turn out 10 short pieces in addition to the long ones this year, we would have 100,000 extra pieces.
>
> Once the Union of Writers announces the figures there is no room for us to retreat. We must go forward with our plans to fulfil and surpass them.

In a letter published in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (September 30th, 1958) the President of the Union of Chinese Writers, Mao Dun, triumphantly announced the results of this appeal: the rate of growth of Chinese literature was keeping pace with the rate of growth of Chinese economy:

> In June, July, and August of this year more than twice the number of plays of all kinds were staged than in the corresponding period of last year. The time of preparation has been considerably shortened, some plays were produced in less than 10 days of rehearsals. We have produced twice as many films as last year, and their production took less than half the time. The number of poems, songs, short stories, and novels has doubled, while the proportion of the works written by workers and peasants has increased considerably.

According to a correspondent of the *New China News Agency* (Peking, September 24th, 1958):

> A great cultural advance has followed the leap forward in industry and agriculture this year. In the field of literature and art, there is an unprecedented growth of creative work among the working people.
>
> A large number of professional writers and artists have gone to live and work among the workers and peasants, bringing literature, drama,

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and other forms of art to factories, mines, villages, and lumber camps in the remote forests. And in helping to enrich the cultural activities of the masses, they have also enriched and developed their own artistic and creative work. As production has leaped forward, the workers and peasants have felt an urgent need to express their enthusiasm in the form of literature and art. . . .

In Sulu *hsien*, Hopei Province, half of the country's population of 400,000 is engaged in some form of writing and other artistic creation. There are now creative groups in every village and every family has its writers. They have already produced 1·4 million items, from poetry, ballads, and short stories to paintings. . . . In Kiangsu Province, there are 300,000 workers and peasants in regular creative groups. They have turned out ten million items in the past six months. Shanghai workers in the three months up to July produced 80,000 pieces. . . .

The "Big Leap Forward" in literature was matched in science. The press is full of reports about the scientific exploits of workers and peasants, their discoveries and inventions. In *Chung Kuo Ching Nien Pao* (Peking, June 16th, 1958) there is an article entitled "Break the Blind Belief in 'Experts' ":

> Some people say: "Science had always been making progress, and produced such men as Newton and Einstein before socialism and the Communist parties came into being." That seems to be a powerful argument against Party leadership over scientific work. It is true that there were science and scientists when there was neither socialism nor Communist party. But it is also true that science has now been developing fast and there are now more scientists. . . . The absence of the socialist system and of the Communist party leadership in the past was a misfortune due to the limitations of history. . . . In the current big leap forward, a large number of experts, innovators, and inventors have emerged from the worker and peasant masses. . . . Under the socialist system and the Communist party leadership not one Newton, or one Einstein, but thousands of Newtons and Einsteins are produced.

*

Less Caviar

ART BUCHWALD, the author of *I Chose Caviar*, related in his latest book the following conversation in the Lenin Museum of the Revolution:

> "You people had a revolution, and you built a museum to it. Why didn't you let the Hungarians have theirs?" I said.
>
> "That wasn't a revolution," the guide replied angrily. "It was a counter-revolution."
>
> "What is the difference between a revolution and counter-revolution?"
>
> "A revolution," he said, "is when the peasants and workers revolt against the landowners and capitalists. A counter-revolution is when the owners and capitalists revolt against the workers and peasants." (*More Caviar*, Gollancz.)

This type of humour apparently does not appeal to Soviet critics, *viz.*, *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (October 21st, 1958):

> The "Orpheuses" of bourgeois journalism do not appreciate descending to hell. The misery and bitterness of the working classes don't inspire their well-paid "lyres." But they very willingly describe the paradise of the rich in excited, joyous and dribbling shrieks, showing their repulsive joy. . . . One of these "Orpheuses" is Art Buchwald, an American living in France and writing for well-known American papers and magazines. Buchwald recently spent a few weeks on the Côte d'Azur, on behalf of the bourgeois Parisian magazine *Paris Match*. As a result of this trip he published a series of articles, "a plain dish" of social gossip and trivial anecdotes, with hot pickled dressing. . . .

Art Buchwald reproduced this Soviet *feuilleton* in the New York *Herald Tribune* (November 15–16th, 1958) with gratitude ("Thank You, Comrade Lench!"), but warned him that now he too belonged to the despicable category of writers for the "bourgeois press."

Comrade Lench has hastened to reply (*Literaturnaya Gazeta*, November 29th, 1958):

> For what is Mr. Buchwald thankful to me? One Sunday Art Buchwald has no subject to write about, and lo and behold, Leonid Lench provides him with an attractive column. . . .
>
> The American journalist, uneasy about this, hurries to justify himself before his masters and clients. (What if suddenly the omnipotent "Senate Commission on Internal Security" should say: "Let's get on to this Art Buchwald! How dare he permit himself to write about millionaires?") . . . Fear of losing his royalties has apparently so influenced Mr. Buchwald that he has lost the rest of his wit, and tries to frighten me with the unpleasantness which allegedly might follow as a result of my being published in the "bourgeois press." Vain fears, Mr. Buchwald! . . . I permit you to show my article wherever you may be called (God protect you!). And only after having left that unpleasant place, when you are able to breathe more freely can you say "Thank you, Comrade Lench." But until then there is nothing to thank me for, Mr. Buchwald!

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LETTERS

Reality at the Doorstep

In Mr. Spender's striking argument on Polish and English writers [Encounter, December], he says, truly "extreme situations" do not, socially speaking, exist in this country. In Osborne and much of the *Conviction* stuff, what we seem to find is the imposition of subjective *angsts* on situations which do not objectively justify them. In Poland the literature of extreme situations is in proportion. It is not delusive but realistic. Thus the resemblance is purely formal and superficial, like that between a man who describes a pool of blood as blood and a man who describes a pool of muddy water as blood.

One feels that the true brotherhood is between a man who reports blood as blood and one who reports water as water. The Polish scene, the world scene, are likely to be understood more clearly by writers who do not attach a grotesquely disproportionate emotive charge to a delusive picture of their own country: or, to put it another way, by writers who are properly rooted and orientated in their own culture.

Much has been written about the "provincialism" of such writers. Although I happen myself to be deeply concerned with international affairs and literatures I would like to argue that insularity is in a way a virtue, at least now, for an English writer. The occupational disease of writers has always been hysteria. They have been, and it is to their credit, more sensible than most of the possible dangers both to the individual life and to the society in which they live. It is right that these things should be felt. It is wrong that they should lead to a collapse. For this means an inability to cope, from any point of view including the merely professional. What is, I suppose, necessary, is feeling and sensitivity balanced by, and indeed to some extent counteracted by stability (as, biologically, occurs in a properly working nervous system).

It is reasonable to feel the uncertainties of life, the prospects of sudden death from atomic war, the abominable threat of totalitarianism. But it is a good thing to see them from a position of strength. The feeling of stability which goes with general Englishness may be partly illusory. Just the same, the nerve of English culture has *not* collapsed. In those cultures which have been even only slightly worse affected, like the French, the lack of bottom produced at one point the horrible gyrations of men like Sartre. Verbalisations replace feelings. General concepts take the place of the actual events and individuals. It is English insularity, more than anything else, that has prevented this sort of breakdown in this country. However precarious the real situation that rootedness and strength persist, and produce. Nor is the precariousness relevant. The sanity is there now, even if it went to-morrow, an emblem and example of all sanity. (The Englishman who can still feel, even to put it at its worst, that he is at least superior to some nattering frog across the Channel, has not lost his nerve.) Where a dangerous situation has to be sweated out, nerve, however obtuse, is at least preferable to panic, however sensitive.

Who can deny that a good deal of cosmopolitanism among writers is a too conscious attempt to feel and understand the whole world, leading simply to imaginative dilution? Trying to cover all humanity, they end up with nothing at all. There is too much to grasp and they have to fill in the inevitable gaps with those plausible-looking abstract formulæ. Thus we get the paradox by which those who try the hardest often fail the most to understand things beyond their experience. Is this because they have made too little effort to understand the things within their experience? Wazyk speaks for most of Poland's formerly doctrinaire writers when he says, "Have I lost the gift of seeing, or the gift of convenient blindness?" He is reasserting the judgment, proportion, and fact against their old rivals. And he returned to reality by looking at what was closest, at Nowa Huta, on his own doorstep.

Robert Conquest

London

Micawberism

Alastair Buchan's final article in the "Our Bomb and Theirs" series is a good summary and contains a broad and informed discussion but his final conclusion must be as firmly rejected as any other vague hope that things will somehow get better.

First, some minor points. He says I pleaded in my article "on moral rather than political or military grounds for the unilateral renunciation of our own nuclear weapons." The word *moral* is too often used to dismiss any unwelcome extension of a field of discussion. My working life so far has fallen into three parts: working on military questions in the Admiralty and the Foreign Office, working on political questions as a foreign correspondent of a newspaper, and working on what are conventionally called moral questions as a writer. Having gone this far round the clock I find little difference between the three fields. I tried to show in my article that it was necessary for mankind to stop risking his own extermination, and that the only logical approach to this was through unilateral nuclear disarmament. I wouldn't know whether the necessity and the logic are moral, political, or military. Necessity transcends these categories, and logic is common to all three.

With respect, I think unlimited destructive power *is* a new phenomenon. That well-organised borough-council laboratory might years ago have been able to produce enough psittacosis virus to wipe out all mankind, but is there even now an efficient way of getting it all over the world, as fall-out does for radioactive poisons? Also, couldn't some other well-organised laboratory have produced enough serum

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to immunise the whole of mankind? One would like to know more about this before accepting Buchan's argument.

The meat of Buchan's article is in his peroration, where he writes of "the paradox of force: the more there is available the less readily it can be used," and says that the West must find "a new authority for the use of force, based on the determination that it will be the temporary servant rather than the permanent master of diplomacy and negotiation."

This is either "Moral Rearmament"—a change of heart will save us all—or it is pure Micawberism. The argument rests on a fairytale optimism, just as does Kissinger's hope that if a nuclear war starts neither side will use nuclear weapons above a certain size. Buchan hopes that we shall "use force with the restraint and discrimination which came naturally to our 18th-century ancestors." Maybe our 18th-century ancestors showed restraint, but our 17th-century ones didn't—think of the Thirty Years' War; nor did our mediæval ones—think of the Crusades. Nor did our 19th- and 20th-century ones; there was not much restraint or discrimination about the American Civil War, or the two World Wars. Weapons are developed and weapons are used. Now weapons have been developed which can destroy us all. Do we continue racing to make more and more of them, or do we accept the logic of our common threatened humanity, forget all about after you Cecil after you Claud, and simply catch ourselves up short and stop it? That is neither a moral nor a political nor a military question, nor even a rhetorical one. It is a total question; as Buchan would say, an absolute one. The danger is absolute, and we must avoid it absolutely, that is to say, unconditionally. It is now or never, and the now is running out fast.

WAYLAND YOUNG

London

Dissent on Pasternak

STUART HAMPSHIRE'S adherence [ENCOUNTER, October] to what I think must be called the Zhivago cult makes the whole phenomenon still more baffling. And although he hastens to point out that the general "enthusiasm is quite unconnected with politics in the narrow sense," I can scarcely think of any other explanation.

The practically unanimous chorus of acclaim on both sides of the Atlantic has been characterised by a curious ambiguity, in which all disclaimers of the individual merits of a novel are made—readability, story, character, etc.—but a net judgment of "great" rendered nevertheless. Hampshire's article has the same look of embarrassment.

A work that is really liked gives rise to countless reactions: "Yes, and what about this scene, character, remark, etc." In the case of *Dr. Zhivago* the tenor has been uniformly evasive: "It is true the people are lifeless, the plot non-existent, etc., nevertheless—Great." This is a mere cul-de-sac, a refuge for perplexity.

After the reviews, in fact, it is simply bewildering to read the book. I found it not merely unreadable as a novel (it can also, of course, be called something else, perhaps a "poem" as Edmund Wilson said in the *New Yorker*) but so stuffed with pretentious disquisitions on art, philosophy, and religion, as to be actively irritating. It twitches disjointedly from one emotionally meaningless situation to another for 530 pages. Dozens of characters referred to exist only as names (often, curiously, complicated double-barrelled ones, as though Pasternak were amusing himself at our expense). Zhivago himself scarcely exists. Not one impression emerges about any of the characters: they do not even "symbolise" anything. They all speak a uniformly denatured language. They are not motivated by anything comprehensible, nor are they organically related.

Of course such a canvas can be called "vast": but it is not vast, it is merely verbose. And the verbosity is aimless—it cannot be seriously thought that the shapelessness of the novel in any sense conveys the atmosphere or reflects the chaos of the Russian revolution and civil war. Both the plot and the characters are evidently arranged as pegs for Pasternak's disquisitions on art, philosophy, and religion, still further padded by the civil war anecdotes which are doubtless still current.

It is just these war anecdotes, some of which contain literary "potentialities," that show us to what a really unusual degree Pasternak is incapable of narration. He never *tells* the anecdote, but merely refers to it. It requires an active effort of benevolent imagination to visualise the anecdote for oneself, and see that if it were told by someone who could tell a story it might be interesting after all. Pasternak's narrative style is essentially the same as a synopsis of "what went before" in a popular magazine, limitlessly expanded, and all the deadlier for it.

So—with no plot, and no characters, there is, presumably, philosophy. Here Mr. Hampshire's remark that Pasternak's philosophy is "naïve," and hence quite beyond those of us who are decaying in the West, is simply breathtaking. Pasternak's philosophy is the antithesis of naïve—it is highly sophisticated. A random sample: "History is meaningful because it is symbolical." This would obviously sound just as good if it were put the other way round. Another theme, that all great art is nothing but the continuation of the Revelation of St. John, is equally depressing: aside from contradictory references to the Pyramids and to ancient Greek art, both before Christianity, after all, which he elsewhere claims as the starting point of all history (awkwardly taken from Hegel), what the "philosophy" of the book boils down to is Pasternak's determination to present himself as a pious Christian thinker.

The strange thing is that Pasternak's only genuine feeling concerns the Jewish question—perhaps understandably, in view of his Jewish descent and his conversion in late youth to the Russian Orthodox Church. Pasternak asks: after they bestowed the incomparable blessing of Christianity

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on the world, why did the Jews have to be too headstrong, too particularistic, to accept it themselves? Why did they choose to go on defying the current of "history"? Pasternak puts this classic piece of either "liberal anti-Semitism" or "Jewish self-hatred" into the mouths of one Jewish boy and, oddly enough, of Lara, the principal female character, who repeats the identical argument at greater length but in much the same words.

The political reasons for the furore over the novel are obvious. But the extravagant praise must surely reveal a different order of malaise.

World tension has naturally created longings for hope; the systematic politicalisation of life must likewise create longings for art. Perhaps the explanation is simply that Pasternak is the only candidate to fill the enduring vacuum in Russian letters. In some ways he is made to order for the rôle: an unchallenged lyric gift, twenty-five years of silence, and a fine face, who has suddenly broken his silence and in defiance of the censorship publishes—at last!—a Christian, or at any rate moral attack on the Soviet régime. (Surprisingly enough, the largely religious poems attributed to Zhivago himself and appended to the novel as a sort of epilogue, are arrestingly mediocre, in Russian too....) This, plus the cloak-and-dagger circumstances of the book's publication in Italy, has aroused an enthusiasm which, to my mind, has swamped the judgment of intellectuals on both sides of the Atlantic.

But surely it is an exaggeration to think of *Dr. Zhivago* as an anti-Communist novel *par excellence*. It is not, of course, conformist; it is not written according to a Soviet stereotype, either Stalinist or post-Stalinist; it might therefore legitimately be welcomed as a sign of spring.

For all practical purposes the action of the book stops in 1922; the revolution is never discussed at all, and the civil war is seen only intermittently in random episodes, in which the Bolsheviks are never blamed for anything in particular and which make only an impression of dreary suffering in general. Considering the unprecedented agony of the Stalin régime, it seems absurd, if Pasternak were really saying something trenchant about the régime, for him to have limited his criticism of "Communism" to a remark of Zhivago's about Marxism not being so "scientific" as it should be (said, moreover, to a robust, full-blooded Bolshevik who does not even deign to reply), a few generalities about suffering, and the desirability of non-involvement. It is only by dint of claiming that Pasternak's shafts soar far above Soviet Communism; that they are directed at *all* forms of socially directed action, against socialism as such, that is, as well as Soviet terror (which remains unmentioned) that a case can be made out for the book's being against the "régime."

But even as a broad-gauge criticism of this kind *Dr. Zhivago* is surely too diffuse to be effective. It may have annoyed the Soviet authorities and unleashed their robot-critics, but why should it provoke enthusiasm abroad as a work of art? To those who consider the Soviet Union pernicious *here and now*, it should seem obvious that Pasternak had been cannily navigating between the Scylla of Soviet-style conformism and the Charybdis of a genuine critique, using the loftiness of his Christian ethics as a rudder.

JOEL CARMICHAEL

New York City

Colonialism

ACCORDING to Mr. Worsthorne ["The Idea of Colonialism," ENCOUNTER, December 1958] the notion of a Commonwealth composed of black-skinned, brown-skinned, and pink-skinned people is "manifestly absurd." Allowing the Asians and Africans "to determine their own future as they see fit" is "a novel doctrine which does not stand up to a moment's analysis." Mr. Worsthorne's attitude to the wogs, like all racial or colour prejudice, is too irrational to be argued away. And on what historical evidence does Mr. Worsthorne offer us that premise which he casually slips into the argument, that "all international relations" are "determined ... on calculations of national interest"? The "realism" which Mr. Worsthorne advocates is as bogus as the realism of the Communists. The so-called facts of power are only one among many sets of facts which the study of society in action reveals. How does he call *"realistic"* a total interpretation of civilisation in terms which exclude the social function of ideas and symbols, and of the desire for the approbation of contemporaries and posterity; man's incorrigible pursuit of justice; the moral and intellectual untenability of Western mastery of the world; and a number of other *facts* of current history?

Mr. Worsthorne's arguments are strange. He alleges three cases of Asian and African "contempt" for "anti-colonial ideology," then goes on to assert the "simple truth" that arguments for and against the subjection of one people by another are "intellectually untenable." I should like to say this: "white intellectuals" have nothing to teach us about the treachery and tyranny of Asians and Africans, and cannot argue us out of our search for freedom, equality, and dignity. Insofar as I am a "coloured intellectual" it is to the point if I say that most of my most serious writing over the last ten years has been far more critical of Asian humbug than any Western criticism can be. Many other Asians and Africans can say the same.

Living in a society in which the documents of Asian political writing over the last ten years cannot find publication, Mr. Worsthorne is understandably ignorant of the fact that we never ask permission from politicians in order to think and criticise ourselves. But Mr. Worsthorne's views certainly make things most difficult for those who try to fight chauvinist, anti-European manifestations of Asianism and Africanism. Would the following also not justify the subjugation of Hungary?—"There is no possible moral obligation for one state voluntarily to allow another to take actions which are gravely contrary to its own interests."

I will only ask Mr. Worsthorne to be half as

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

strict in judging the French, the British, the Germans, and the American leaders as he is in judging Nehru or U Nu. When we think of Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini, Franco, Salazar, McCarthy, Tojo, Bandaranaike, Nkrumah, Chiang Kai-shek, we see that nobody has a right to be self-righteous. If there are "sides," it is a struggle of those who love freedom and justice against those who love power, prestige, and mastery. Perhaps the struggle is one that goes on inside every intellectual.

C. R. HENSMAN

Colombo, Ceylon

The Master

MR. GEOFFREY GORER, in his review of a book called *Freud and the Twentieth Century* [ENCOUNTER, November], remarks that its editor, Dr. Benjamin Nelson, "has unearthed four pages from the pen of Freud Himself (part of the preface to Theodor Reik's *Ritual*) which have so far escaped reprinting in any collection of the Master's writings." There are at present two collected editions of Freud's works on sale in this country: the *Collected Papers* and the *Standard Edition*. The preface to which Mr. Gorer refers is reprinted in Volume V of the *Collected Papers* and in Volume XVII of the *Standard Edition*. His researches into the Master's writings must have closed down a little precociously.

JAMES STRACHEY

Lord's Wood
Marlow, Bucks.

[GEOFFREY GORER *writes: "I was abstracting the bibliographical notes on pp. 283 and 309 of 'Freud and the Twentieth Century.' Dr. Benjamin Nelson appeared a careful editor, and it did not occur to me to check his references against either of the sets of Freud's Collected Works. We are all indebted to Mr. James Strachey's meticulous scholarship; but I cannot hope to emulate it, especially when dealing with a very minor contribution to a large symposium."*]

Taxation

... What Robert Neville says about "dodging the tax-collector being an old and confirmed Italian habit," that is all to the good, in that it shows that the Italians realise if obscurely, as do many distinguished monetary reformers in this country, namely, that taxation is simply legalised robbery, and that there are other ways of "finding the money" for things than abstracting it from people's pockets.

KAIKHOSRU SHAPURJI SORABJI

The Eye, Corfe Castle
Dorset

AUTHORS

J. M. Cohen *writes:* Born 1903, a former Exhibitioner of Queen's College, Cambridge, spent many years as an indifferent man of business, before turning to literature as a profession. First principal work was the Penguin *Don Quixote*, which was followed by Rabelais and three other classics. Am at present working on Pascal's *Pensées* for the same series, to be followed by an eye-witness account of the Conquest of Mexico by Bernard Díaz del Castillo. Am particularly concerned with Spanish literature and with that of Spanish America, and compiled the *Penguin Book of Spanish Verse*. More recently have written a survey of the poetry of the last fifty years, which Hutchinsons will publish in the autumn. Have reviewed and contributed articles to a variety of journals chiefly on poetry and the philosophy of religion, and have been responsible, on the side, for the two anthologies of Comic and Curious Verse, which will shortly be followed by a third.

F. W. Dupee *writes:* Born Chicago; educated Yale; former editor *Partisan Review*; author of *Henry James*, a critical biography; at present editing Trotsky's "History of the Russian Revolution" for appearance in Anchor Books; wrote a "Preface to *Lolita*" to accompany the selections in *Anchor Review*; professor of English at Columbia University; hasn't been in England since 1926, when, as a then devotee of Shelley, his first move in London was to visit the Serpentine, where Harriet Shelley drowned herself.

BERTRAND RUSSELL's book *My Philosophical Development* is being published shortly by Allen & Unwin. . . RICHARD HOFSTADTER is Professor of History at Columbia University, New York, and is visiting lecturer at Cambridge this year.... IAN NAIRN is on the staff of the *Architectural Review*.... PETER WILDEBLOOD's latest novel *West End People* has been adapted into a musical play which will be produced in London shortly....

The editorial and business offices of ENCOUNTER are at 25 Haymarket, London S.W.1. A stamped addressed envelope (English stamp) or international reply coupons should accompany MSS, otherwise they cannot be returned. For subscription details please see page 1.

ENCOUNTER is published by Martin Secker & Warburg Ltd., 7 John Street, Bloomsbury, W.C.1 for THE CONGRESS FOR CULTURAL FREEDOM, 104 Boulevard Haussmann, Paris 8, France. PRESIDENT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: Denis de Rougemont. SECRETARY-GENERAL: Nicolas Nabokov.

The views expressed in the pages of ENCOUNTER *are to be attributed to the writers, not to the sponsors*

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED